

## TAKEN AT HIS WORD.

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### TAKEN AT HIS WORD.

BY W. H. MACY.

CAPTAIN GALVAN was, perhaps, neither better nor worse than the average of old school shipmasters. Despite his rough exterior and rude speech, there was much good in him, and when brought to the pinch it generally appeared that his heart was in the right place, yet in his everyday dealings with his crew and officers, he was to the last degree arbitrary, and at times even brutal. More than once on the voyage he had said and done many hasty things, of which he had occasion to repent at leisure—even in sackcloth and ashes.

We were cruising for right whales near the island of Tristan D'Acunha in the

Southern ocean, or on what was called by the regular old professionals, the "Trusteen Ground." We found the best whaling quite near the island, and often chased and captured whales, even among the *kelp* which, attaching itself to the rocks below, forms a sort of network extending out a considerable distance from the land. The captain was getting rather old and stiff-jointed for active service, and seldom went in his boat, leaving the work almost entirely to the mates who were all young men. They were smart and efficient officers, ever zealous in the performance of their duty, which in the main was to fill the hold of the good ship

Midas with whale oil. But things did not always run smoothly, of course, and when luck was against us, the captain was prone to storm away at his subordinates, and to make things very uncomfortable for the time being, while he was almost sure, in every such instance, to feel very much ashamed of himself afterwards.

One dull gloomy day, when our boats had been chasing whales the greater part of the day without success, and Captain Galvan was more than usually out of temper, he had climbed into the mizzen-top, as a post of observation, whence he could see the several boats, which had separated from each other, but were now concentrating and working slowly back towards the ship, for the weather was threatening, and indicated that a gale would soon blow up. The third mate's boat was nearest and as she approached within hail, the captain suddenly raised his voice, for he had been growling and blaspheming to himself in a tone not loud but deep.

"What's the matter, Mr. Armstrong? Why don't you strike a whale?"

"Can't get near enough to 'em, sir. There's whales enough about, but they don't come together in a gam, and they are mighty shy."

"If you can't do anything, any of you, I suppose I'll have to go down and get a whale myself. Come! there's a whale blowing now up under the land there."

"He's galled," said Mr. Armstrong. "It's the same one that I was after three or four risings, but he's very shy, sir." And his crew con inued pulling leisurely towards the ship, while he himself looked dubiously at the threatening sky.

"What the — are you coming alongside for?" roared Captain Galvan, with a sudden accession of fury. "There's a whale up there, blowing you all out of water."

"Do you really want us to give chase to him?" inquired Mr. Armstrong, who could hardly believe but that the captain was joking.

"Do I mean it?" shouted his superior, with all the cutting sarcasm he could throw into the word. "Yes, I mean it! Be off, and don't come aboard this ship until you bring a whale!"

"Ay, ay, sir," coolly answered the young third mate. "Pull three oars—hold water two—pull ahead."

And his boat headed up toward the land

in the direction where he had last seen the whales.

He had gone well out of hearing before the other two boats, nearly abreast of each other, came up under the quarter, and Mr. Gaston, the chief mate, inquired, "Where's Mr. Armstrong bound on that tack?"

"After that whale up yonder," said the captain.

"And it's time we began to get the ship snug for heavy weather, I think," said Mr. Gaston, with the utmost coolness. "Way enough! Ship in your oars—stand by here, everybody, to hoist the boats!"

The captain had half a mind to order the other two boats off again, as he had Mr. Armstrong, but he looked in the resolute face of his first officer, and decided to let the subject drop.

Besides, his own better sense was beginning to assert its sway. He knew that he had done wrong in sending even one boat's crew on a chase which could involve nothing but risk without any good results, for the gale was already increasing rapidly. The larboard and waist boats were taken up on the crane in a hurry, for no time was to be lost, and every man pulled with a will under the orders of Mr. Gaston. The captain did not interfere or give any command though he had descended from his perch in the mizzen-top, but still continued sulky and out of temper.

"Hadn't we better run up a signal, sir, for Mr. Armstrong to come aboard?" inquired the mate.

"That's my business, when I'm ready to attend to it."

"Certainly it is. If it had been mine, I should have attended to it long ago. But I remind you of it, in the name of common humanity, and if you care for the lives of those under your orders, you'll lose no time about it."

"Mr. Gaston, who commands this ship?"

"You do, sir. More shame to you that you allow your sulky humor to make you forget your obligations. You know as well as I that this is not a fit time to send anybody on a wild goose chase, and that the sooner we get the canvas off the ship the better."

"Well, go ahead, and shorten sail, then." And Captain Galvan went aft to hoist the signal of recall with his own hands, while the active mate proceeded to make the ship snug, bringing her down to her foresail and

close-reefed maintopsail. This was done none too soon, for before it was finished the wind and sea had so increased that the peril to which we knew those in the starboard boat must be exposed became a matter of intense anxiety.

The lookout, sent to the masthead, had reported that he could see nothing, and when the boat had been last seen, while we were on the topsail yards reducing sail, she was still pulling to windward, though the captain's signal was flying, and must certainly have been seen by the third mate.

"What can *that* mean?" asked the mate. "He certainly would return, if he saw the flag at the gaff, and wouldn't be long in making up his mind either. I can't understand it."

"I can," said the second mate, who had heard something from one of the shipkeepers. "The old man was in one of his tantrums, and the last words he yelled at Mr. Armstrong was not to come back to the ship without bringing a whale."

"Is that really so?"

"Yes sir—old Fisk the shipkeeper heard it all, and he says that Mr. Armstrong only answered, 'Ay, ay, sir,' very quietly, and pulled away to windward without even looking back again."

"This accounts for it all," said Mr. Gaston, thoughtfully. "I can imagine the cutting way of his saying the words, and I only hope they may not prove the death of as fine a young man as ever jumped, and of his whole boat's crew, besides. The old man makes a perfect fool of himself at times, and then is sorry for it afterwards. I am very much afraid he will have a repentance in this case that will burn his conscience as long as he lives."

At this moment, Captain Galvan stepped out of the cabin, pale not with anger, but with anxiety. Reason and common sense had returned, though too late to undo his rash act.

"Masthead, there!" he cried. "Do you see that boat?"

"No sir, nothing in sight?"

He threw his hat on deck, and jumped into the rigging himself, climbing up to the maintopmast crosstrees with an agility surprising for one of his years and weight. Yet he always prided himself upon his eyesight as being very keen, and he stood there and faced the blast, gazing long and earnestly at the weather quarter for some sign of

those who had been lost through an act of rash folly on his part, sacrificed to his own wayward temper.

At length he descended slowly, and with a face expressive of tenfold more of anxiety and remorse than before.

"Mr. Gaston," said he, "we must get her round on the other tack, and head up as well as we can toward the land. Can we get more sail on her?"

"We can set a little more, sir, I suppose, but it would do no good, and would soon have to be taken in again, for the force of the gale is increasing all the time," answered the mate.

"Yes, yes, so it is. It would be folly, I know, but we must go on the other tack, for I suppose that is all that we can do. *Stand by there to wear ship!*"

The ship when trimmed on the other tack looked well up to windward of her old wake, but under her short canvas, she made a large drift, and so far as the possibility of doing anything to save the lost boat was concerned, it really made little difference which tack she was on. The darkness settled down upon us with nothing in sight but sea and sky, for the now distant island was hidden in the gloom, and the gale blowing still harder during the night, sail was reduced until we were brought down to storm-staysails. The captain paraded the deck all night unable to sleep or eat, the worm of remorse gnawing at his heart. His last bitter and tantalizing words to Mr. Armstrong recurred to his mind in their full force, with the effect they would be likely to have upon the feelings of the sensitive young officer. He would have given worlds, had he possessed them, to be able to recall his last speech to a brave man who had ever done his duty faithfully, and had never merited a word of reproach from his superiors.

For the next three days we were lying to most of the time, the weather not permitting us to make sail to work up again to our old cruising grounds. There were sad hearts on board the *Midas*, for the tragic fate of our shipmates had cast a gloom over all hands, but saddest of all, was the crushing remorse of Captain Galvan.

The mates respected the agony of his feelings, and said not a word of reproach. Of course they could say nothing in the way of consolation or encouragement, and thus the wretched man was left to the torture of his own conscience.

When at last the change of weather enabled us to make sail and bear up for Tristan D'Acunha with a leading wind, he resumed some of his old life and spirit in his anxiety to return to the place, at least, though he could not but feel that any search for boats or men must be hopeless. The change wrought in his appearance by the sufferings of those restless days and sleepless nights was fearful to behold.

It was a fine pleasant day, when with all sails set we again drew near to the bold inhospitable island. There were whales in sight too, that morning, but we had not delayed to lower for them. The captain intended to communicate with the old lord of the isle, Governor Glass, as he was called, and after reporting our loss, to shape his course for Cape Town or St. Helena to ship men, for we could not proceed on our whaling voyage short-handed as we were. We must have been very nearly at the old position, where we were lying aback when the captain gave his last fatal order to Mr. Armstrong, when the lookout aloft reported that he saw a boat apparently fast to a right whale in shore of us, and quite close to the rocks. His words were received with incredulity, for every one thought he must be mistaken, but observations with the spy-glass soon proved that he was not. There was a fast boat, sure enough, and close by her was to be seen a whale spouting thick blood. But where could the boat belong? for there was no ship visible.

"It must be that Governor Glass has manned a boat or two, and is carrying on the whaling business from the shore," said Mr. Gaston. "He talked of doing so, when I was here last voyage."

"But his settlement is away round on the other side of this land, isn't it?" asked the second mate.

"Yes, they'll have a long way to tow their whale, unless, perhaps, they may have set up a whaling station on this side."

Captain Galvan had taken the telescope, and was gazing through it with all the power of his keen old eyes. He looked and looked again, the color came and went in his face; he signed to the helmsman to keep her away a little more, to run nearer in shore, took his old position again, and resumed his scrutiny with the spyglass.

"What's the matter with the old man?" said one to another. "See how excited he is."

Suddenly the telescope dropped from his hands with a crash to the deck.

"God be praised, it's my boat! it's Mr. Armstrong!" And the captain, entirely overcome by the reaction of his feelings, sank to the deck and sobbed like a child in the presence of all his crew.

It was indeed our young third mate, who had now killed his whale, and taking it in tow, set his waif for more help, which was not long in reaching him. The whale was towed alongside the ship, and the captain, stepping below into his cabin, sent word for Mr. Armstrong to come down, feeling that their first meeting ought to be sacred from prying eyes and ears, but the steward sees and hears many things, which he is supposed to know nothing about, and this was the station I filled on board the *Midas*.

"Mr. Armstrong! God bless you, and welcome back!" said the captain; "you may be able I hope to forgive my last unkind words to you, but I can never forgive myself. But how did you escape, and where have you been all through the gale?"

"Snug on shore, sir, and making a good lee of it, only we had to live on muscles and birds' eggs. After I saw the ship this morning, I came out and struck the whale in good time to bring him alongside, when you arrived at the old cruising station."

"But do you know the misery I have suffered through these long, long days and nights? O Mr. Armstrong! Why didn't you turn back when you knew it was blowing a gale!"

"For that matter, I knew it well enough when you sent me up to windward, but your last order to me was, not to come back till I brought a whale, and I never should have come back to *this* ship without bringing one."

"But you saw my signal of recall, surely?"

"I did sir, but at that time, I had got so far to windward that I was making a lee under the island, and it was really safer to keep on than to undertake to return."

"Well, it's all well as it has turned out, but your escape with life seems a miracle, and I hope what I have suffered the last few days may be a lesson to me as long as I live."

And there's no doubt it proved so. For ever afterwards, during the voyage, when Captain Galvan felt himself in danger of giving way to his hasty passion, he checked himself with the remembrance of this episode, and especially if the young third mate was present, a single look into his face was sufficient to recall the captain's better nature, by reminding him of the time when he had been *taken at his word*.

## "THAT MINISTER."

BY MISS R. HUDSON.

"I'm sure I don't see the necessity of your making such a fuss! In my young days girls didn't use to fly into a passion just because they were advised to marry the one, among their many beaux, who was best off in the world! You're perfectly ridiculous, Kitty;" and Mrs. Dunham, a sharp-faced widow of forty years, knitted away, indignantly.

Her daughter Kitty, with a flush of vexation on her cheeks, and an unmistakable pout on her lips, went on sewing in silence. A silence that aggravated the mother into further speech.

"Most girls would be glad to marry Mr. Staunton, a likely young man and a minister, too. It's so respectable to be a minister's wife!"

"Is it? Well, mother, suppose I wait till he asks me to marry him. He hasn't yet, you know," put in Kitty, with a toss of the brown curls that had fallen over her eyes.

"Humph! It's easy enough to see which way the wind blows. He'll ask you, fast enough, and, Kitty, I do hope you won't be such a goose to refuse him. A girl in your circumstances too—"

Kitty dropped the stocking she was darning, for the mist of tears in her eyes made it impossible for her to see a thread, and answered spiritedly:

"I don't care what my circumstances are. I *should* be just such a goose! I can't bear Mr. Staunton, you know I can't! I'd rather take in washing than marry him."

Mrs. Dunham looked in despairing deprecation, from the tearful face to the decorous picture of Kitty's dead father, hung upon the wall, and back again.

"Kitty, you're positively wicked. There never was a better young man. A real Christian; (and getting such a salary)!"

"I never did like ministers!" sobbed Kitty, "never! and the girls have plagued

me about this one until I just hate the sight of him. I can't help it," she went on more boldly; "and as for my marrying him, why, he isn't the only man in the world!"

"He's the only man likely to propose to you, except that good-for-nothing Mr. Sydney, who spends every cent he earns on dress. Now, whether you like it or not, Kitty, you can and must be civil to Mr. Staunton. He's coming here to tea to-morrow evening."

Kitty's eyes flashed.

"Coming here to tea! and on Thanksgiving evening! Why, Sophia and the children are coming, and I meant to have such a good time! Now that stupid minister will spoil it all." And Kitty dropped her work-basket with a crash, and leaving the contents scattered on the carpet, ran out of the room.

Thanksgiving morning dawned cold and clear. A light snow that had fallen during the night, lay over the ground. Kitty Dunham lifted her gray skirts daintily as she tripped to church with the cherry ribbons on her bonnet fluttering gayly in the sunshine. Kitty had somewhat regained her good temper, and even managed to smile as she bowed to Mr. Staunton in the church porch. It must be confessed, however, that she did not once glance toward the minister during service, but sat studying the carpet beside her feet, wondering if Mr. Sydney was in his pew, and wondering still more what had kept her mother at home; for Mrs. Dunham had, for the first time within Kitty's remembrance, stayed from church on Thanksgiving day. The minister, indeed, was not attractive to contemplate. He was a tall thin young man, awkward of motion, with a pale face, painfully light hair, and rather pathetic blue eyes hidden behind glasses; yet the lank figure always gained a certain dignity in the pul-

ply, and the voice that talked this morning of the goodness of God was rather sweet than otherwise.

At home, Mrs. Dunham and her daughter Sophia were deep in the mysteries of cookery. Both flew about energetically, casting anxious glances at the clock. As the last stroke of twelve reverberated through the kitchen, Mrs. Dunham came up the cellar stairs with the key of the further cellar in her hand.

"There, Sophia! Now just wash up a little, or she may suspect something. It makes a good deal of cooking to have Thanksgiving and a surprise party come together; but I believe the last thing's done and safe out of sight. Now don't you allow those children of yours to let the cat out of the bag. Bertha never would forgive me if Kitty should find out before they come!"

Kitty's demeanor during the Thanksgiving dinner and the afternoon that followed was quite as usual. She frolicked with the children, gossiped with Sophia, and was her own merry self, till twilight fell and the minister rung at the door; then Kitty retired into a corner, and scarcely uttered a word. Mr. Staunton, noticing this, perhaps, appeared exceedingly uncomfortable in spite of the kindly efforts of the elder ladies to put him at ease. He had a painful propensity to blush and stammer, and he did not get on well with children. When supper was over and they came back from the parlor, Kitty suppressed a yawn, and prepared to settle into silence again; but, provokingly, both her mother and Sophia had disappeared and left her guest on her hands. Resolved not to talk, Kitty took refuge behind three albums and a portfolio of engravings, with which she kept the minister busy. She was patiently going over the list of photographed relatives, when a loud ring at the door caused the hearer to drop his lapful of books and the speaker to rise in relieved fashion. Kitty opened the outer door and exclaimed aloud. The steps were crowded with people, the sidewalk was full, and shadowy detachments were in the street. The merry voice of a wrapped-up figure, foremost among the throng, inquired if Miss Kitty Dunham were at home.

Kitty stood confounded a moment, then, laughing in her gleeful girlish way, threw the door wide open and welcomed her unex-

pected guests heartily. In five minutes the parlor was full, and Sophia, and Mrs. Dunham, and Mr. Staunton were the centre of a group of talkers.

A gay evening followed. No need to describe it, for who has not attended old-fashioned surprise-parties? Kitty, of course, was queen of the occasion, and a very uncomfortable queen she was. As if by common consent, "that hateful minister"—Kitty was growing to consider him more and more hateful—was constantly thrust upon her; and the meaning smiles and *double entendres* she had to encounter from her girl friends, made her downright angry. In dances, she was beset by sly allusions. In games, all his forfeits, and they were numerous, had to be paid with her. Kitty never knew how many yards of tape she was obliged to measure with the minister that evening, or how many times she went to Rome with him. The only comfort was that he seemed to dislike it because *she* did, and would come up to her in such a deprecating way that she was ashamed to be ungracious; but his hopeless and awkward blunders—for the minister was anything but at his ease in society—always aggravated her so that she lost all patience. Once, for instance, while "picking cherries," he stepped nervously backward, floundered off the ottoman and nearly pulled her with him; again, in "going to Rome," he bumped heads with the lady he was about to kiss; and Kitty could have borne it better if she had not seen Mr. Sydney's satirical smile. Mr. Sydney, who had hardly spoken to her during the evening, but had been Bertha Rivers's most devoted companion. It was hard. The young hostess would have given much to have sent her guests away, and to have indulged in a good cry.

Her trials were not yet over. In the little lull that always follows supper, Bertha Rivers arrested the general attention by exclaiming:

"Is there any one here who doesn't know the game of 'Post-Office?'"

Five or six persons of both sexes, professed ignorance; among others, Kitty and the minister. Bertha's eyes sparkled.

"Why, let's play it! It's great fun. I'll constitute myself doorkeeper."

The motion was seconded, silence attained, and Walter Danvers, a good-natured and nonplussed youth, was voted first postmaster.

Walter and Bertha disappeared in the hall, whence Bertha presently returned, announcing that there was a letter for Miss Kitty Dunham. That young lady proceeded to the hall. As she entered it arms were thrown around her, and she received a hearty kiss.

"If this is the game," laughed Walter, "I rather like it!"

Kitty scolded a little, settled her ruffled attire, and then inquired:

"Well, what now? Is this the end of the game?"

"Nonsense. You're postmistress, vice Walter, removed. Walter, go back to the parlor. Now, Kitty, whom have you a letter for?"

Kitty, to get out of the difficulty easily, named a youthful cousin of hers. Bertha remonstrated.

"He's too young. You're trying a trick. I'll fix you, Miss Kitty!" And the merry girl ran back to the parlor. Kitty heard her say—heard only too plainly through the half-shut door:

"Kitty has a letter for Mr. Staunton."

The laugh that followed set the blood tingling in Kitty's veins. She had reached the end of her endurance. Looking desperately about for some way of escape, she chose the nearest door, and rushed into the spare bedroom, which had been given the gentlemen for a dressing-room. In her headlong progress she came violently in contact with Mr. Sydney, who stood before the little old-fashioned glass that hung above the bureau, pulling the bow of his neck-ribbon straight.

"O!" was the simultaneous exclamation, supplemented on the gentleman's side by:

"Why, Miss Kitty! what's the matter?"

"N-nothing," stammered Kitty, scarlet with mortification, "only we were playing post-office, and Bertha—to plague me, I suppose—has just told Mr. Staunton that I had a letter for him. I ran in here to get rid of"—Kitty was going to say "him," but substituted "it."

The listener realized the situation, and stopped Kitty, as she was about to dive behind a pyramid of cloaks, with an inelegant but excited:

"Hold on! I'll fix him!"

In another moment Mr. Sydney had extinguished the hall-lamp. In another he had pulled a sheet from the spare-room bed, and thrown it over him. He had just time

to turn out the kerosene lamp on the mantel-shelf, to hush Kitty's stifled laugh, and to glide out into the dark hall, before the parlor door opened, letting out a gush of voices and laughter, and then closed behind the minister, who evidently supposed the darkness to be a trick of the game, and stood perfectly still in a patch of moonlight. The white figure advanced. Mr. Staunton caught sight of it, and retreated up the entry; for, poor nervous youth that he was, his cheeks still hot with the bashful agony of the evening, he dreaded this embodiment of a new practical joke. Kitty watched, momentarily expecting that Bertha would appear. She did not. The two figures came slowly toward the door behind which Kitty stood, one retreating, one advancing. As they approached, Kitty threw the door half open, and noiselessly retreated in her turn.

Now, Mrs. Dunham's house being an old-fashioned one, had, as many old houses do have, some rooms lower than others. The spare bedroom was at least three feet lower than the hall, and three or four narrow steps led down to it. Mr. Sydney and Kitty never thought of these steps, and Mr. Staunton had no knowledge of them; so it happened, that, when the latter, with one hand raised to ward off the white figure following, attempted to step within the dark dressing-room, he lost his balance and fell sidewise, striking heavily against the bureau.

The people poured out of the parlor, alarmed by Kitty's scream. The minister lay on the floor, motionless and white, the two discovered culprits bending over him. Kitty cast one glance at Mr. Sydney, which said plainly as words, "Get a doctor!" He was gone in a moment, and without answering a single one of the questions dinned into her ears, Kitty watched the gentlemen raise the inanimate figure and lay it on the bed.

The doctor arrived miraculously soon. Knots of curious people waited in hall and parlor. Kitty, in the doorway, silently wrung her hands, fearing the minister was dead. When the doctor at last sent them all away, stating, with professional brevity, that it "wasn't so bad as it might be," she drew a long breath of relief.

"He's got a bad blow on the head, and has broken his arm."

Poor Kitty! as if that were not bad

enough! No murderer could have felt more guilty than the young girl, as she hurried here and there for bandages and restoratives.

Energetic Mrs. Dunham would have been in her element if the condition of the patient had not been alarming. When he was brought out of his heavy stupor, he became delirious, and for days continued so. There was no thought of removing him to his lodgings. If Mrs. Dunham ever wearied of tending him, Kitty did not. Night and day she was with him until the crisis was past, alleviating his suffering if she could, or sitting silent and pale, listening while he constantly called her name in his delirium. He talked of her so constantly, in fact, that Mrs. Dunham turned everybody out of the house except the doctor.

What Kitty felt, as she heard over and over again the unconscious telling of the minister's love for her, cannot be told; but when Mr. Staunton was himself again—his old quiet patient self—with a certain spirituality of expression in the blue eyes that told how near he had been to the other world—Kitty was changed. The gay girl had grown sober, and thoughtful, and self-forgetful. She would sit for hours in the sick room, for Mr. Staunton's lack of strength was almost pitiable, reading to him, and attending to his slightest want with unvarying kindness. It would have been hard to be unkind to him, indeed, for his gentleness, thankfulness and patient endurance sometimes brought the tears into his nurse's eyes.

Kitty then heard the story of his life; heard that he, the only son of a widowed and poor woman, toiled for a collegiate education, while his mother sacrificed the best years of her life to aid him in the struggle; and when, at last, he was independent and comparatively wealthy, ready to repay his debt of kindness, his mother died. Watching the blue eyes of the narrator fill with tears, Kitty's own were suffused.

A month's nursing and anxiety paled Kitty's cheeks. One day, as she was making some slight purchases at Mr. Sydney's dry goods establishment, that young man, who had been confounded by her sudden coldness toward him, exclaimed:

"Why, Miss Kitty, you're positively growing haggard! That vampire of a minister annoys you still, I see, and you feel obliged to take care of him because you

partly caused his accident. I think you've fully discharged your obligation by all these weeks of nursing. It's too bad, that, disliking him as you do, you should have him quartered on you so long!"

Mr. Sydney was checked by the utter absence of assent in the face on the other side of the counter, and by the frigid tones that said:

"I told you five yards of ribbon, Mr. Sydney. You are cutting six."

It was only three days after that the minister went back to his lodgings with his health scarcely restored, but unable to reconcile prolonged idleness with his conscience. Went, leaving gratitude and regard, and as many substantial tokens of both as would be received. Went without expressing any love except as his eyes told it.

Perhaps Kitty was disappointed. Perhaps she missed him as she sat alone that night, but there were no evidences of it. The months went on, and Kitty did not get back her roses. People wondered at her sudden sobriety and less vigorous health. Others, noting her sedulous attendance at church, believed she was experiencing a change of heart.

Spring came, and the influence of the languid days made her more listless still. Her mother was really alarmed about her, but to any suggestions of change Kitty offered quiet and effectual opposition. Mr. Staunton went and came, like a quiet earnest friend, and Mrs. Dunham gradually resigned the hope of his being anything more.

One warm evening in May, Mr. Staunton waited for Kitty after evening lecture, and asked the privilege of walking home with her. She assented—with how different feelings from those of old!—and they paced slowly up the moonlighted street. Blossoms scented the air, and odors were wafted from wayside gardens. The two young persons, yielding to the influence of the time, were very silent for a while; then Mr. Staunton said:

"Miss Kitty,"—he always called her Miss Kitty—"I have something to tell you."

Kitty's hand trembled as it lay on his arm, but her voice was steady as she asked: "What?"

"I can't help feeling as if you were interested in my plans," he said, half apologetically, "since you were so kind to me—



kinder than any woman except my mother has ever been; so I wanted to tell you, first of any, that I am going away. I have had a call from a city congregation, and I am going to accept it."

There was not a word of answer. The houses, the moonlight, the shadows were whirling before Kitty's eyes. If Mr. Staunton had not held her she would have fallen.

"You are ill!" he cried in alarm.

But Kitty had regained her senses, and answered with a voice only a shade fainter than usual:

"Yes, a little. I have not been well for a long time; but it is over now."

She was conscious of a half-wish that life were over, too; and a sudden pity for herself brought quick tears to her eyes. She

could not control the flood of emotion that was coming over her. She knew she could not, and with a last effort of pride she stopped before Sophia's house.

"I want to go in here a minute."

"Give me a few moments!" he said, pleadingly. "I must tell you what I feel. I cannot go — why, Miss Kitty, you are crying!"

Two hours later, Mrs. Dunham, dozing in her rocking-chair, was waked up by Kitty and the minister, who stood smilingly, side by side, before her. Mrs. Dunham stared at either and at both, and finally opened her lips.

"Well, I declare! Kitty Dunham, you don't mean to say you're going to marry 'that minister?'"

## THE BATTLE FOR THE CEDARS.—A STORY OF LOVE AND LAW.\*

BY PRESLEY W. MORRIS.

[NO. 3.—COMPLETE IN FOUR NUMBERS.]

### CHAPTER XV.

#### IN THE NIGHT.

There was no need of a forged will.

The master of The Cedars had discovered one that was genuine, with Herbert Cashel's true signature affixed, and attested by the proper witnesses. It bequeathed to his nephew, Oscar Cashel, son of the devisor's deceased and only brother, John Cashel, and his heirs, to have and hold forever, all of the great Cashel estate, personal and real property, tenements, hereditaments, and so forth.

It was no wonder that the master of The Cedars rejoiced with wild triumph, for this will would settle forever the great suit of Cashel *versus* Cashel. He had feared defeat, but now he would gain an overwhelming victory over Wylie and his client! This will assured him the possession of The Cedars and all the property of the late Herbert Cashel!

For many minutes the man could do nothing but rave out his rejoicings, stopping only to run his eye over the precious document occasionally; but at length he opened the one remaining paper, thick, and, like the will, somewhat yellow with age. As he read it, his face paled.

It was nothing that could take away from

him the Cashel fortune; but it was a narrative that could influence an honorable man to but one course; a narrative that only the basest of villains could disregard and hide away. The story of the marriage of Herbert Cashel, and loss of his wife and child at sea. The man finished reading the paper, and then, with a curse, stuck it away in the secret drawer. The will he placed in his breast. He pushed the drawer, and it closed with a sharp click, hiding its secret story from all the world, save one man,—that man the one who would be the last of all to give a clew to it!

On that night, the rest of the master of The Cedars was disturbed and broken: Visions of terror flitted across his dreams, and in imagination the will that he had discovered was taken violently from him, by some avenging power. He rose in the morning feverish and unrefreshed. Still, he exulted in the possession of the will, and after he had eaten his breakfast felt better physically. In the evening Evans returned. As usual, the master of The Cedars shut himself and the lawyer in the library.

"Well?" he inquired deliberately.

He did not intend to announce his discovery immediately. It could do no harm to know whether or not Evans would go as far as he had bargained. It would be some-

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thing of a triumph to let the attorney proclaim that he had forged a will, and then inform him that his work of crime was all needless. He fancied that this would give him something of a hold on Evans.

"All right," Evans replied to that one interrogative word.

There was an expression in the lawyer's face, half fear, half triumph. He had completed his task, but it was so very lately done, that the realization of his crime remained present before him; time had not hardened him to the contemplation of it. Oppositely, however, he could not forget the wrong value of his work.

"Where is the document?" asked the master of The Cedars.

Evans drew forth a leather-bound wallet, and from it took a paper, which he gave to his client.

"Very well done," said the master of The Cedars after he had glanced over it.

Evans flushed slightly at the words of praise. He had lost his sleep in preparing that paper, and he was glad that it suited. Besides, how much depended on its being well executed!

"But I have something that will answer the purpose better," continued the master of The Cedars, a gleam of triumph coming in his face, as he drew forth the true will of Herbert Cashel.

Evans took it, but could only stare at it in a meaningless sort of way for a time.

"What is it?" he asked presently.

"What does it seem to be?"

"Another will, — Herbert Cashel's. What is the need of two? Is it your work?"

"It is his own, a genuine document," cried the master of The Cedars.

"Genuine!" echoed Evans. "I do not comprehend."

"I mean that this is the will of the late Herbert Cashel, signed with his signature, and attested by the proper witnesses, as you can certainly perceive by examination. Evans, the suit is ours, beyond a doubt!"

Evans understood at last, and he trembled a little. His first sensation was one of disappointment. Vanished forever was his hold on the rich man before him! His mine of wealth had taken to itself wings and flown away!

But the second thought of Evans cheered him. After all, there would be great peril in attempting to use the forged will. Now all danger was gone, and he and his client

were sure of their case; and the winning of it would be a great triumph for him as an attorney. His fee would be a fat one, as well, in addition.

How circumstances change the opinions of some men!

These thoughts, opposite to the reasoning of the previous day, flashed quickly through Evans's mind, while he spent a minute in examining the will.

"Where did you discover this?" asked Evans, glancing up from his examination. "How did it happen that you knew nought of it before?"

"All is explained," replied the master of The Cedars, "by the fact that I found the will in a secret drawer, which I suppose has not been opened for years, of course. I discovered the drawer and its contents accidentally. Ha, ha! we can checkmate old Wylie now, and all impostors in whose name he may bring suits."

But there came to the mind of the man the recollection of a narrative, hidden away in a secret drawer, and he knew how falsely applied the term was!

"Will you let Wylie go ahead till the last?" asked Evans, "or will you make him aware of the fact that you hold the winning card immediately?"

"Would I stretch out my hand to prevent him or her from stepping over a precipice? No! They may proceed to the very last step they can take. Then they shall be waked from the dream they have had."

Evans agreed with the master of The Cedars in his plan. They continued to discuss their schemes.

"You must remain with me tonight, Evans," said the master of The Cedars, presently, "and we will celebrate this lucky turn in my fortunes. What say you?"

Evans demurred a little at first, but finally accepted the invitation.

Night soon mantled the earth. Dark shadows fell around The Cedars. The owl hooted in the distance, and the mournful cry of the whip-poor-will come from nearer at hand.

Within the library lights shone brightly. The master of The Cedars had apparently forgotten the lesson that he had so lately been taught, the lesson that had cost him nearly his life, and was drinking wine in large quantities. And Evans departed from his usual custom, and drank considerably.

The two men were jubilant.

"It is an era in my life, Evans," cried the master of The Cedars; "one well worth rejoicing over."

The hours sped. A great clock in an adjoining apartment struck the hour of eleven.

The lawyer's brain was not much accustomed to wine, like that of his host, and he sank back in his cushioned chair and slept soundly.

The minutes glided away.

The master of The Cedars was sleepless enough. He sat and mused, his heart beating quickly, keeping time with his triumphant thoughts. A few hours previous how precarious had seemed his hold upon the Cashel fortune. Now—

Why rounded the moan of the sea in his ear? Why before his vision was a white babe, floating on the waves?

After all, had he fallen half a-leep? He sprang to his feet, and at the same moment the great clock sounded out a stroke, repeating it eleven times.

It was midnight.

The last stroke of the clock died away, and there was an instant of deep silence. Then there came a long, mournful sound that echoed through the stone mansion like a cry of agony. There was a brief pause, and then it was repeated. The blood of the master of The Cedars was heated with wine. He seized a lamp and started from the library.

"I will teach some fool better than to be playing his tricks," he muttered.

Again and again sounded the solemn, mournful wail, to guide the man in his course. The cries were coming from a remote part of the building.

They ceased, but the master of The Cedars kept on his way. The wine he had taken added to his courage, and in his anger he felt determined to reach the bottom of the mystery.

At length he reached the bottom of a long oaken stairway, carved in fanciful design. This stairway led into a part of the mansion that was unused, and which echoed to the tread of human footsteps scarcely once in a year.

The master of The Cedars paused. He possessed brute courage, but it was not strange that he hesitated here, under the circumstances. He considered for a moment, and then was about to turn back, when once again that cry rang out. It

sounded so near, at hand that the man started in sudden fright.

He looked about him, but beheld no one. Once more he was about to retrace his steps, when he chanced to glance up the stairway. Far up it, at the head, he perceived a dim light, and in the light stood what seemed to be a tall human figure, faintly outlined.

Brighter and brighter grew the light, till the figure was defined clearly to view.

The master of The Cedars stood for a time as though he was fascinated. Then, with a wild exclamation of superstitious fear, he turned and fled.

The face of the figure was like the one that often came before his vision, looking out of the waters of the sea, at him.

Swiftly the terrified man sped from one hall to another, till he reached the library. He grasped Evans and shook him till he awoke.

"O Evans," he cried in terror, "I have seen a wraith, a ghost, a dream!"

"The devil!" exclaimed Evans, still half asleep.

"No, not the devil, but worse. His ghost!"

"Whose ghost?" asked Evans, more wide awake, and becoming a little frightened himself, looking wildly about him. "Where?"

The master of The Cedars became calmer.

"I heard some strange cries," he returned, "and followed the sounds till I came to an oaken stairway in the west wing. There, at the head of the stairway, I beheld a tall figure, shown by a mysterious light."

"Perhaps your imagination deceived you," said Evans, trembling some.

"No! I tell you no!"

The two men sat down, and there was silence.

Outwardly, the master of The Cedars was now calm enough, but his hands were clenched till the nails were eating into the palms, and a dead weight was sinking upon his heart.

The clock struck one. The stroke caused the two to start.

"Let us retire," whispered Evans. "I think we will both feel better in bed. Besides, we need some rest."

The suggestion was acted upon, and ten minutes later the heads of both rested on soft pillows. They were in apartments that adjoined and opened into each other. The doors between were left unclosed.

The wine that Evans had drank, had lost its effect on him. He could sleep no longer, but tossed about restlessly. He fancied that something oppressive and frightful was in the very air.

"I believe this cursed place is haunted," he muttered.

At last he sank into a slight doze.

A dull thud as of the contact of some bodies, and which seemed to fairly shake the building, roused Evans. He sprang to a sitting posture. In an instant a pistol shot rang out, reverberating through the stone mansion with a hundred echoes. It was followed by a terrible cry of pain, a cry that seemed scarcely human in its agony.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### A TERRIBLE VOW.

Dark clouds hung overhead, so black and thick that not a single star shone through. Zig-zag flashes of lightning ran across the sky, at times. The thunder reverberated through the heavens with deep mutterings. The wind sighed with mournful sound. The tokens of a violent storm were surely abundant.

Along a lonely road that was scarcely wide enough for his steed, a solitary traveler was riding. The forest stretched out on either side of him. He had been galloping madly, but the difficulties of the path caused him to slacken his pace. The darkness was so dense that the man could distinguish nothing, not even the branches of the tall trees that reached above him, between earth and sky, being visible. And the flashes of lightning only served to blind and startle him and his beast.

Surely the traveler was greatly belated, for it was some hours past midnight. No man would willingly be out at such an hour with such a storm threatening!

"I have lost my way, evidently," muttered the man, as the path became more and more difficult.

"It is useless to continue farther in the course that I am traveling."

He changed his course in the opposite direction.

This change did not better the case any. The man discovered presently that he was wandering aimlessly in the woods. The overhanging branches brushed roughly against him, and his horse stumbled over

logs and roots. The lightning flashed more frequently, and the roll of the thunder became louder and deeper. Still, the storm seemed to be merciful, for it did not burst upon the traveler's head.

At length the man dismounted and slowly picked his way along, leading his horse by the reins of the bridle. The lightning's flashes showed a tall figure, with handsome face and long red beard. Could it be Victor?

It was no other.

His horse followed, obedient to his touch; but very slow was the progress they made. Victor considered that it mattered little whether he made any or not, for what could aimless wandering in the darkness of a great forest avail?

"If I could only find a shelter of any kind from the coming storm, I would ask no more," Victor muttered to himself.

As if in answer to his words, a light flashed up before him. His heart bounded joyously. Then it seemed as if he was destined to be disappointed, for the light disappeared.

"A mere will-o'-the-wisp," cried Victor bitterly.

But in a moment he beheld it again. It was fixed, not a delusive *ignis fatuus* to decoy him into swamp or marsh. The foliage of a tree had hidden it from him for a time.

The light was not far away, and, with an exclamation of relief, Victor continued toward it. His course was easy enough, though occasionally the trunk of a huge tree or low-swinging branches would hide it from his sight, or the blinding light of heaven would dim it till it was not visible.

When it was apparently but a few rods away, there came a flash which revealed a building that Victor could almost touch. He felt around it till he found an entrance at which no door was swung. Doubtless it was a new stable; and Victor led his horse in, the animal giving a whinny of pleasure. Evidently, the structure was but a few feet square, and was occupied by no other living creature. Victor left it, and walked on toward what he supposed must be the dwelling-house of a family. He discovered that the light was shining through a small window in the side of the building. He could not avoid a glance through, into the apartment within.

Before a fire blazing in an open fireplace was the figure of a woman, bowed low. Her body was moving back and forth, keep-

ing time with a wild melody which she was singing in a voice uncultivated, but clear and musical, and which came audibly to Victor as he paused.

Victor judged that the building was naught but a rude hut. He could see no furniture in it save a rude table, a few stools, and a couch. A candle was burning on the low mantel. Victor wondered if the woman was the sole occupant of the hut, but soon discovered that it was not so, for, as he stood, a rough door opened, and a strange figure entered. Victor was startled. Was the being before his sight human? Doubtless it was, but how indescribably hideous! He was of great stature, with long arms, and shoulders broad as a giant's. His features were distorted so that his face was a caricature upon humanity as horrible to look upon as that of an inhabitant of Hades might be. In his eyes was no light of intelligence, and he grinned and gibbered, gazing about with idiotic stare.

Such was the creature that appeared before the startled gaze of Victor, who could not but wonder for the moment if he were having an ugly dream, and this the distorted figure of his vision.

But, no; it was all real.

"Georgio," said the woman, "did the threatenings of the storm rouse you, as they did me?"

Her English was not quite perfect, but intelligible enough.

There was no reply save a wild laugh, Victor stood at the window hesitating. He asked himself the question should he enter this place where this horrible creature was? The idiot threw himself down before the fire, while a peal of thunder shook the hut. "Hark!" cried the woman. "Georgio, what a night this would be for our purpose. How grand, Georgio, it would be to have the very elements celebrate our revenge?"

Still the idiot only laughed wildly.

"Georgio, let us enact the tragedy," continued the woman, her voice gathering strength, and tremulous with emotion. "Brave fellow! where is the betrayer?"

The idiot sprang to his feet with an agile bound. He disappeared through the doorway by which he had entered. Almost instantly he returned with a burden in his arms.

"A human figure!" murmured Victor.

"A man, as I live! What means this? Is he to be a victim?"

The idiot held the figure erect. Victor shuddered. Before him was the man who called himself Lionel Cashel, master of The Cedars.

"Strange! Impossible!" muttered Victor. "Was I deceived?"

The idiot grinned and gibbered, while the woman rose, lifting high her clenched hand. She was tall, of middle age apparently, and had certainly once been handsome.

It was a strange, dramatic scene. The flickering firelight cast weird shadows on the wall, the woman's face was glowing with wild rage, and the idiot continued to grin and gibber. How unreal it all seemed! yet it was no scene of the imagination, but an actual, vivid reality.

This act of a drama was to become more tragical still.

The woman advanced a step: her lips parted, and a cry came from them.

"Revenge, Georgio! Revenge!"

The idiot struck the figure in his grasp a terrific blow upon the side of the head with his hand.

Victor heard no cry from the master of The Cedars.

The blow was repeated upon face and head and heart.

"Though my deadliest foe, I cannot see him die thus!" cried Victor.

He hastened along the side of the hut, and, as he expected, found a door.

"To the death, Georgio! To the death!" came in a wild scream from within.

Victor threw his weight against the door. At the same instant a peal from heaven's artillery shook the earth; the wind swept by with a wild howl; a weird blue flame seemed to light the universe; the rain came down in torrents, — a perfect deluge.

The storm had burst at last.

Victor's efforts availed nothing. The door stood firm, and he could not effect an entrance.

He walked back to the window.

It was a wild sight that met his view. The idiot had his hapless victim prostrate upon the floor, his long fingers wound and interlocked about the throat.

"Great Heaven! he is dead already," cried Victor, sick at heart.

"To the death, Georgio! To the death!" sounded the cry of the woman, audible even above the roar of the storm.

"Murder! murder!" shouted Victor, with all the strength of his voice. "Fiends, cease!"

But his repeated cries were unheeded. Doubtless the patter of the rain, the howl of the wind, the crashing of the elements, drowned them. The sound of voices would be carried from the interior outward, while that without would be unheard by the occupants of the hut. Besides, Victor could see this tragedy, and was listening, straining his senses to catch the sounds, and the very motion of the lips of the participants was an aid to his hearing; while the woman and the idiot were absorbed in their work.

At length the idiot ceased from his murderous assault, and looked toward the woman with a grin of delight.

"Eloisa, sweet Eloisa," came to Victor in a wild wail, "sleeping beneath the skies of your sunny South, you shall be avenged! By your wrongs I swear it!"

The idiot raised the prostrate figure of the master of The Cedars. Victor was astonished beyond degree; for upon the face was no sign of blood or bruise or wound.

"Is this the work of necromancy?" cried he. "Can a man be murdered, and give forth no sound? Can he be beaten and stamped and choked, and no marks left upon him?"

## CHAPTER XVII.

### BARBARA'S FOE.

Evans leaped from his couch, cold chills of terror running over him. He felt that that wild scream was the death-cry of some creature: could it have proceeded from the master of The Cedars?

Evans was immediately relieved of fright upon that point, for a voice came to him from the adjoining apartment, calling, —

"Evans! Evans! are you awake?"

"Yes," answered Evans.

"Come here."

The lawyer entered the apartment of the master of The Cedars. A lamp was burning there.

"Evans, did you hear those sounds?" asked the master of The Cedars, who was half-dressed, and sitting on the side of his bed.

"Yes, I heard them," Evans returned. "This place must be haunted."

"Those sounds are inexplicable at present, Evans," said the master of The Cedars;

"but nevertheless they were not at all ghost-like. I believe they were real."

Then he added, in a hollow tone, —

"The occurrences of this night are mysterious; but I will fathom them yet."

Evans glanced into his face, and saw there the evidences of deep emotion. In the man's eyes was a *strange, terrified look*. Evans did not think him a coward, so he could not explain this to himself.

"Cashel is a braver man than I am: then why this singular expression of fear in his face?" was the lawyer's thought.

But Evans had not beheld a face, that, living, he would dread more than that of any spectre! The master of The Cedars, lying on his couch, in the silent hours of the night, had thought about the presence he had beheld, and had told himself that the figure was but a creature of the imagination; if not that, an apparition indeed. But the fear that it was real could not be driven away; and that fear tormented him dreadfully.

The silence that had fallen between the two men was broken by a peal of thunder.

"There is going to be a storm," said Evans.

"Yes," assented the master of The Cedars absently.

Evans had taken a seat. For some time the two sat silent, listening to the repeated and long-continued peals of thunder. At length the master of The Cedars rose to his feet, and grasped his coat firmly in his hand. He was very pale, but set his lips resolutely.

"I do not propose to be tormented with doubts any longer," he said. "We can as easily reach the solution of this mystery now as at any time. Ayl more easily. Come, Evans."

He walked to a table where a pair of richly mounted pistols were lying, and, picking up one, gave it to Evans, retaining the other himself; then he started from the apartment. Evans hesitated for a moment, and then followed after him.

"There was a sound as though the door at the main entrance was burst open," said the master of The Cedars. "At any rate, my senses located the sound in that direction; and we will see if that is the case."

Presently they came to the long hall of the main entrance. A gust of wind nearly extinguished the lamp.

"The door is open," said Evans.

"As I supposed," was the muttered reply.

Shortly the two men stood in the doorway. The master of The Cedars handed his pistol to Evans, and shaded the light with his hand. The thunder was yet pealing in an almost continual roar, and vivid flashes of lightning were playing across the sky.

"Is this all that we are to discover?" said the master of The Cedars.

He was looking out toward the threatening heavens, and the lawyer felt that he need not reply to that question, for it had not been addressed to him.

"Ugh!" shuddered Evans, "what an ugly storm there will be shortly!"

The light was shining on the open door. Some stains there attracted the attention of Evans, and he bent down to examine them. They were of blood.

"Look!" he cried.

The master of The Cedars held the light close.

Evidently the stains were quite fresh. It looked as though they had been made by the wiping of a bloody hand upon the door.

Some foul work has been done here," exclaimed Evans.

But who has suffered?" asked the man by his side in so hollow a tone that he was startled.

To Evans these stains were spots of blood, that of a human being it might be, and so there was no danger for him, he could endure the sight easily; but to the master of The Cedars, whose nerves were all shaken, who dared not explain to any living creature what he feared, they seemed, at that moment, the tokens of doom.

A flash of lightning made it as light out-of-doors for an instant, as though the god of day were shining, and Evans beheld from whence the blow had come. Stretched across the great stone steps in front of the mansion was a large form.

"See!" said Evans. "What is that? There is an explanation of these stains of blood."

He took the light out of the hands of the master of The Cedars and held it down by the prostrate form

"Cashel, it is a dead dog," he cried.

It was the body of Barbara Lindsley's foe. He had met a just fate at last, and was stiff and cold in death. Violent enough had

been the animal's end, for he was covered with blood.

"This is not the work of spirits," cried Evans.

"Come in, and we will close the door," said the master of The Cedars, with a shudder.

This last discovery did not relieve him. The death of the dog was no less a sign of doom, he felt, in his state of mind, than the stains upon the wall, though it explained them. Evans had said that this was not the work of a ghost. He believed that. The question was, who had done it? Could this deed and the figure that he had beheld in the west wing be connected? The probability of an affirmative answer to this last question was what caused his shuddering and fears; for, if this was so, it established beyond a doubt the fact that that figure was no creature of the imagination, no wraith, no ghost.

As the two men started on their return to their sleeping apartments, a woolly head was stuck out of a hole that led toward the kitchen.

"Foah heaben, Massa Cashel," said a thick voice, "what am de matter? Is dar any danger?"

"Go back to your bed, you black wench," said the master of The Cedars crossly. "The danger is all past."

"Was dar anybody killed?" continued the servant, curiosity overmastering fear of her master's displeasure.

"No!" was the harsh reply.

Such was the character of the man, that even terror could not melt him to kindness toward the black creatures, who served him faithfully always.

"There has been an attempt at burglary," said Evans, as they searched once more the sleeping apartments.

"Your ghost, Cashel, was, I think, a very solid thief!"

The master of The Cedars made no audible reply.

"Would to heaven I could believe that was all!" was his thought.

"Evans, you can sleep with me the remainder of the night," he uttered.

Ere Evans scarcely touched the couch, he was fast asleep, for he considered that all sounds were accounted for by the theory of burglars, and that, they being gone, there was no further danger.

But there was no sleep for the master of



The Cedars. He could only lie listening to the sounds of the storm without, and thinking of the events of the night.

Naught else occurred to disturb him or the slumbering Evans. Morning dawned, and he arose. He went down to the library, leaving Evans still asleep.

Presently the negro servant, Sant, appeared.

"'Clar' to goodness, Massa Cashel!" he exclaimed, "somebody hab done gone killed old Leo."

"I know it," said his master gruffly. "Have him taken away from the doorway; and be sure that the blood on the door is washed off."

The storm had lulled as suddenly as it had arisen, the sky had cleared, and the sun came up in golden splendor. The man threw open a window of the library, and looked out. The birds were singing in the still damp trees, and all nature was bright and fresh, seeming to be rejoicing that the storm was past.

The master of The Cedars began to feel better. He wondered if, after all, his imagination had not deceived him to a certain extent. The sunshine, the light of day, dispelled his fears. He felt ready to believe that Evans's idea was the correct one. The figure that he had seen was naught but some robber, bent on plundering. And the robber had killed Leo.

How easy it was for the man to persuade himself, now, that the theory which was acceptable to him, which quieted his fears, which lulled his apprehensions, was the correct one.

"Bah!" he said finally, "that thought of mine was a mere absurdity. I must have been badly frightened to be so deceived. Ha, ha! can I not stand the effect of a sudden flash of light shining upon a tall burglar?"

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### OUT OF THE FOREST.

Victor experienced a feeling of intense relief. The figure that had been buffeted so cruelly was not that of a human being, he perceived at length, but was, instead, a mere image, a model.

"What means this wild scene?" Victor muttered.

He thought of the reality it might portend, and shuddered. Was the idiot being trained

so that he could be the means of a terrible retribution?

Surely, no other inference could be drawn.

Victor turned away from the window and went back toward the stable. His clothing was soaking wet from the falling rain, but he had now no wish to enter the hut, for he knew not what kind of a reception he might meet. Victor was a brave man when circumstances demanded, but he was not one to rush recklessly into danger, and he realized that there might be great danger in entering this place.

"I prefer the companionship of my horse to that of these people," he said to himself. "I can endure this disagreeable condition that I am in till morning."

He entered the stable, and stood by his animal. He heard the fierce sweeping of the storm, and the crash of falling timbers in the forest: he realized that he had made a narrow escape. The shelter of this rude hut was safety: the wandering along a lonely woodland path in this storm was peril, and perhaps violent death.

At length the storm began to die away: in its very violence it had soon spent itself. The thunder and lightning ceased, the wind howled no longer, and all became calm. Victor looked out from his shelter. In the heavens he beheld here and there a star, and knew that the clouds were scattering.

Presently a tinge of gold appeared in the east: the approach of the king of day was being heralded. The rosy tinge widened out, and soon the morning light became more apparent.

Victor led his horse out from the stable, and mounted. The hut in which he had beheld such a wild scene could now be plainly seen. Victor fixed its outlines in his mind so that he might remember them. He easily found the brushy path by which he had come, and, entering it, rode slowly away. If he could retrace the way by which he had come, he would at last be able to extricate himself from the forest.

Victor's progress was slow and difficult. The overhanging branches were wet. At times he encountered huge trees that had been blown across the path by the storm. Other paths diverged from the one in which he was, and he could only be guided by chance in his course. He felt that it was only aimless wandering, and he might continue thus for hours before he could right himself.

"If there was but one entrance to this forest," Victor muttered, "I would never escape from it; but I know that a hundred paths must lead out of it, and I shall trust to good fortune to guide me into some of them. If I continue to travel, I must strike the boundaries after a while."

The sun rose up from the east, mounting high in the heavens, till at length it rode straight overhead. It was mid-day, and Victor was still wandering. He began to feel despairing. It would be terrible to have to spend another night in the woods. Already he was wretchedly fatigued, and he pitied the poor beast carrying him so faithfully, knowing that his fatigue must be greater; but at last he suddenly emerged from the forest into an open field.

"Thank God!" he cried, in delight.

During all the day he had not found a single habitation; but now he soon discovered a dwelling-house. Upon inquiry, he found that he was but a few miles from Fairmount.

Victor obtained food for himself and horse, and was then directed on his right course. He had no more difficulty, and by the middle of the afternoon reached Fairmount.

By the next morning he was recovered from his fatigue. Fortunately, the drenching that the rain had given him did not make him ill.

The afternoon found him riding down toward the place that just now held the strongest attraction for him of any in the world. He was below The Cedars when he beheld a figure ahead of him, mounted, and trotting slowly along, the sight of which made his pulses quicken. It was Barbara Lindsley; and he hastened the pace of his horse so that he might overtake her.

While he was still some distance behind her, another person appeared to view, coming from the opposite direction,—a man. When he met Miss Lindsley, he bowed low to her.

As he approached, Victor's face flushed hotly; then he rode straight ahead, not giving the man who was passing him a glance.

It was the master of The Cedars. He seemed fascinated; for his eyes fixed themselves on Victor's face, and after he was past his head was turned to continue his gaze: he even checked his horse that he might follow Victor with his eyes.

"Am I accursed?" he cried.

The color that had faded from his face returned.

"It is but a strange resemblance," he muttered. "Bah! what a coward I am growing to be, frightened, as it were, at a mere shadow. His beard was not long and coarse and red, but black and silken."

Victor did not look back. He soon overtook Barbara Lindsley. The girl was thinking of the change in the master of The Cedars. The last time he had met her, he had passed with a cold stare: this time he bowed as though he might be her very slave.

"Good-evening, Miss Lindsley," Victor said, interrupting Barbara's thoughts.

She had been so absorbed that she had scarcely noticed his approach; not turning her head to see who it was. Now, however, she gave him a quick glance of recognition.

He rode along by her side, and they conversed merrily. Very soon De Vere's residence was reached.

"You are coming in, Mr. Victor, of course," said Barbara, after he had assisted her to dismount.

"Yes," he returned.

He accompanied her into the house, having given the horses into the charge of a servant. They found Victoria in the parlor, to whom Barbara introduced Victor. Then music and conversation followed, as usual.

Presently Robert De Vere entered. He already knew Victor, as he had been present a portion of the time on the occasion of his previous call.

"I have just met Cashel," Robert said, when the first greetings were past; "and he informs me that an attempt at burglary was made in his residence last night."

Victor paled a little; but, as it chanced, no one noticed that.

"The attempt was unsuccessful," Robert continued; "but that great brute of a dog that he owned was killed. I am not sorry for that part of the affair, for that creature was too fierce and cruel to live."

Barbara's face flushed a little. That dog had been a terror to her: was it strange that an emotion of pleasure entered her heart, gentle and tender though it was, in hearing of his death?

"I suppose that there was but one dog at The Cedars answering to your description, Mr. De Vere," said Victor quietly; "and I

had thought that he perished previously: but I presume it was not so. I am glad, with you, that he is at last dead, for he was a dangerous brute. I dare say that Miss Lindsley is equally rejoiced that he is slain."

Questions followed, of course, and for the first time Victoria and Robert learned of Barbara's escape. Victoria reproached her that she had not spoken of the affair before, and Barbara could not explain what had prompted her to keep her adventure a secret from them. The moments fled all too quickly for Victor, and soon he was compelled to leave the presence of the woman he loved.

What Barbara Lindsley feared was betokened by the courtesy of the master of The Cedars, when he met her, came to pass. Owing to that fear, his politeness had chilled and frightened her more than his previous coldness and haughtiness had. And what she feared was a renewal of his attentions.

The very next day he called at De Vere's, and asked for her. Barbara was in her room when she was told that he was waiting in the parlor. Her first impulse was not to see him: then she arrived at her old conclusion. She would always treat this man as politely and as kindly as possible, so that in all the future he would be able to find no ground of complaint against her.

She went down. The meeting was somewhat embarrassing at first; but the master of The Cedars made no reference to the past, conversing on commonplace topics, so that presently she felt more at ease.

It was toward the close of his call that he referred to a fact of great importance to the girl.

"Miss Lindsley," he said, "I suppose you are aware of the fact that I am involved in a great lawsuit in regard to my estate?"

"Yes, I am aware of it," Barbara murmured faintly.

"Miss Lindsley, all danger of my losing my property is past," he continued. "I have discovered a will that settles the matter forever in my favor. My late uncle, Herbert Cashel, in that will, bequeaths all his possessions to my father and his heirs."

Barbara felt ready to faint. If this were true, she would never be mistress of The Cedars, could never claim the home of her dead father. By a strong effort, however, she kept herself calm.

As the master of The Cedars rode home, after his departure from the De Vere residence, he felt jubilant.

"Ha, ha!" he laughed to himself, "she heard of that suit, and of course wanted nothing to do with a man who would probably be impoverished. But this true announcement of mine will affect her so that I shall win her yet. Yes, I shall win her yet; for she will realize that there can be no possibility of a doubt of her being mistress of The Cedars."

Meanwhile, poor Barbara was in her room, finding relief in tears.

"Oh that I could forget and never know him more!" she sobbed; "never look upon his face again! I believe that for that I could relinquish all chance of ever possessing my dear dead papa's home gladly."

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE SEA GIVES UP HER DEAD.

The master of The Cedars had called his strange fears absurd; had declared to himself that they were without foundation; yet it was not quite possible for him to drive away all doubts. But he decided that if the thing which might be heralded by that night of alarms should come to pass, he would pursue a bold course; a course that he believed would win.

Yes, a bold course: as bold as some of the schemes of his past life!

A few weeks passed.

During that time no ghostly shape, nor real presence that could terrify, came to disturb the master of The Cedars.

At the twilight of a September evening he was in the library.—that apartment where he spent most of his waking hours. A fire was blazing in an open grate, casting its ruddy glow upon the walls and furniture. The lamps were not yet lighted. Out-of-doors it was very unpleasant. A damp, chilling mist was falling, gathering in heavy drops upon the foliage of the trees, and a cold wind was blowing. Previous to the near approach of night the sky had been of a dull, leaden color; but as night settled down the heavens grew black rapidly.

The master of The Cedars sat by a table, partially in the shadow; but occasionally, when he would turn his head, the firelight showed his face plainly. He was looking well. Lately he had been in high spirits; for all of his plans seemed prospering. Why

should he not look well and be in good spirits? Was he not sure of winning in the great suit of Cashel *versus* Cashel?

Then The Cedars should have a mistress! Sant came in to light the lamps. He did so, and the bright light made the library seem very cheerful in contrast to the lowering gloom without. Suddenly the door-bell rang.

"Answer that ring, Sant," commanded the master of The Cedars.

Sant obeyed. He soon returned.

"A man out dar: says him wants to see you 'bout umportant business, Massa Cashel," he announced.

"Where is his card?"

"He did n't gib me no card, Massa Cashel."

"Did he tell you his name?"

"No, sah."

"Some vagabond, I suppose," said the master of The Cedars. "I don't want any thieves here over night; tell him to be off."

"He looks kind ob genteel," said Sant.

"Why does he not state his business?" grumbled the master.

He considered for a moment, and then evidently changed his mind.

"Show him in," he said to Sant crustily.

But Sant's services were not necessary in the case, for at that moment a tall figure appeared at the door of the library.

"Dar he am, now," said Sant.

The man at the door wore a cloak, a fold of which was turned up about his neck, while his hat was turned down over his eyes. As it was, his face was almost entirely concealed.

Entering the library, he walked deliberately to the fire, and stood quietly before it. Evidently the cold mist falling out-of-doors had dampened and chilled him, and the bright blaze of the fire caused the steam to rise from his clothing.

"Dismiss your servant," he said, in a deep, hoarse tone: "I have business of importance with you."

The master of The Cedars hesitated for a moment, and then signed for Sant to depart. In his heart he was trembling. In spite of the resolution he had made to give way to his fears no more, the first sight of this man caused a sensation of terror in his bosom.

"Curse it! can I not behold a tall, athletic figure any more without this absurd fright?"

He rose to his feet, and stood before the man by the fire, who had his back to the blaze.

"What is your business with me?" he asked.

The stranger straightened himself to his fullest stature: he let the cloak slowly fall from his shoulders, and taking the hat—which still half concealed his features—from his head, he threw it upon a table.

The effect upon the master of The Cedars was startling. This was the figure that he had beheld in the west wing: but then he had some reason to doubt; now it was close at hand, within his reach, and there could be no mistake. For one moment a superstitious awe overcame him; then he saw that the man before him was no presence from the spirit-world, but a solid, tangible reality.

The master of The Cedars forgot the bold course upon which he had resolved. All the fears that he had ever felt before sank into insignificance beside his present awful, absolute terror. He sank back in his seat, and his eyes seemed bursting from their sockets; his under jaw fell; he shook like a man in an ague fit.

"Who are you?" he gasped.

"You should know me well, Henri Valasquez," said the man before him, in tones not deep and hoarse; but rich, clear, and musical. "I am Lionel Cashel; and I am come to claim my inheritance."

He paused for a moment, and stood looking upon the terror-stricken villain. During that moment the silence in the library was so complete that the ticking of the great clock in an adjoining apartment became audible.

"And you, Henri Valasquez," pursued the true Lionel Cashel, "are an impostor and a scoundrel."

"Can the sea give up her dead?" groaned the false master of The Cedars.

"The sea hath given up one whom you supposed the victim of your bloody hands," said Lionel Cashel. "Yea: I was not swallowed up by the waters of the ocean, as you basely designed I should be. Henri Valasquez, your crime has found you out; and the day of your triumph is ended."

All this Lionel Cashel had uttered in calm, even tones.

The calmness of the false master of The Cedars began to return. Memory came to his aid, and he recollected the bold course

he had resolved upon in anticipation of the possibility of this hour. Lionel Cashel, the true master of The Cedars, lived; but courage might win the game yet.

"And what do you intend to do?" he asked of Lionel Cashel, in something like his old scornful manner.

"What do I intend to do?" cried Lionel, the anger that must have been hidden before showing itself. "Can you not solve that riddle, Henri Valasquez? One thing that I shall do will be to turn you away from these possessions: as to what chances you stand for the State's prison, I leave you to consider."

The false master of The Cedars was indeed a matchless villain. His courage rose. The sudden appearance of one whom he supposed to be sleeping beneath the waves of the sea was enough to frighten him surely; but the fright was departing so far that he was growing angry.

"You threaten me with a prison!" he hissed. "Man, you boast before your time. Listen."

Lionel Cashel folded his arms across his bosom, shut his lips close, and stood listening. He felt that he must curb himself, or his anger would cause him to strike the villain to the floor.

"Listen," repeated the impostor. "I fear you not. I am in possession here. I am known as the master of The Cedars. I defy you! Go on in any course that you may choose: you will find that you are throwing yourself against a wall of iron. Do you think the world will believe your improbable story? Ha, ha! Attempt to wrest The Cedars from me, and I will denounce you as an impostor. Who will be most likely to be believed,—you or I? I tell you, man, I have the advantage of you; and I intend to keep it. You propose to cast me out from here: I repeat, I defy you! Appeal to the law, and I will defeat you utterly. You may continue to threaten, but I know, and you know, that you will have to prove your identity. I say I am Lionel Cashel, and you are not: who holds the best proofs?"

The impostor's eyes shone in triumph. How entirely changed he was from the shrinking wretch of a few minutes previous! His own words gave him confidence. He would fight this battle for The Cedars to the death!

Lionel Cashel advanced toward the man,

and he shrank back. Lionel was goaded almost beyond endurance. He half-lifted his arm, and then, with a muttered exclamation, stepped back to the fire.

"I will not strike you, Henri Valasquez," he said. "You deserve immediate punishment; but I will not soil my hands by letting them fall upon you if I can avoid it. God is just; and, as sure as he rules, a day of retribution will come to you."

He ceased for a moment, and then continued, more calmly, —

"I realize what you have said, Henri Valasquez; but I shall labor against you, believing that Heaven will cause the right to triumph. I have a knowledge that there is another claimant for the estate; and if her cause is just, as I believe it is, I would not desire to rob her of her rights. I would not wish to turn you away to install myself. She has gained her case once, and, as I am aware, you have appealed it. Scoundrel, if I can do no more, I can heap difficulties in your way, in case you hatch up some diabolical villainy to defeat her!

"No; I would not desire possession here so that I might cheat an orphan girl out of her inheritance: yet I would like my right to the name of Cashel acknowledged. O man! when you stole my spotless name, you robbed me of a better inheritance than all the acres of this vast estate!"

Lionel Cashel ceased speaking. A silence fell, and continued unbroken for many moments.

Lionel Cashel spoke first.

"I shall remain here tonight," he said simply. "I know your treacherous spirit, Henri Valasquez; but, my eyes being opened, I fear you not. Mark you, however, I want an apartment that I can secure with bolt and bar. Let your servant show me to it as soon as possible; for I have no desire to remain longer in your company. I warn you not to attempt to molest me; for if you do your blood will be upon your own head."

The false master of The Cedars gnashed his teeth in rage. How those cool words stung him! how he would have liked to strike the man before him dead! yet he dared make no move, for he knew that Lionel Cashel, tall and athletic, was by far his physical superior. But, as he rang for a servant, a strange gleam came into his eyes,—a gleam that was cold and cruel. Lionel did not perceive that expression, for,

though he was alert, he was not looking the villain in the face.

"Sant," said the false master of The Cedars, when his ring was answered, "show this gentleman to the crimson room; and build a fire for him as soon as possible."

The man's tones were perfectly smooth.

Lionel Cashel took up his hat and cloak, and followed the servant from the library. Reaching the sleeping-room, he lighted the two lamps he found there. Sant went away, but returned very shortly with a scuttle of coal, and some kindlings. Soon a cheerful fire was leaping and curling in the grate.

"You can go now," Lionel said to Sant.

After Sant was gone, he closed the door, and examined its fastenings; he found that it could be bolted and barred securely.

Lionel looked about the apartment. It was hung with crimson velvet. He examined the walls, but beheld no other means of entrance than the door.

"I am perfectly secure," he said to himself.

He sat down before the fire, and mused.

"Verily, crime is its own punishment," thought he. "The agony of Valasquez in those first moments of beholding me was terrible! An age of torment must have seemed to be concentrated in a moment. But he braved it out well at the last."

Lionel's musing continued.

"My life is a tangled web," he said aloud; "but, come what may, I shall proceed with all my powers against Valasquez. I have delayed too long now. As I told him, I do not wish an orphan girl's inheritance; but it is best to attack him from all sides. A suit against him may not benefit me; but I hope it may aid to overwhelm him with defeat the sooner."

It was approaching midnight when Lionel retired. Considering the apartment secure, he had no fear of danger, and was soon fast asleep.

Meantime, the false master of The Cedars had continued in the library. For some hours he sat in silence before the fire in a crouching attitude that was like a tiger's. That glare that was as cruel as the grave was ever in his eyes.

At length he sprang to his feet, his white face set resolutely.

"This plan is better than any other," he muttered: "why have I hesitated to adopt it? Even had I known that he lived, I

could have prayed for no better opportunity than this night gives me."

He went out, and was absent nearly an hour.

He returned finally with a stout cord in his hand, and locked the doors of the library. Then he proceeded to a desk, and, inserting the key of it in the lock, stood muttering.

"Ay! I will do it," was his thought: "he shall die. He said that if I attempted to harm him my blood would be upon my own head; but I will run the risk. He will give me trouble in the future if I do not put him out of the way. Now is my chance, for I shall never again have such an opportunity."

The man turned the key, and drew out a drawer. Reaching in the aperture it had left, he felt about for a moment, and then from within took out another. This last one contained bottles filled with various colored liquids. He immediately selected one from among the rest. It was labeled chloroform.

He lifted it out, and set it down by itself, while the cruel expression on his face deepened.

Then he lifted out a tiny vial that contained a single drop of colorless fluid. He held it up, and an indefinable expression came into his eyes.

"The last resort," he muttered, "to be used if ever I am forced to the wall!"

With a slight shudder, he replaced the vial in the drawer, and in a moment the desk was locked, the bottle of chloroform being retained.

It was some time past midnight.

The false master of The Cedars opened the door of the library, and glided out, the vial of chloroform and the cord held tightly in his grasp. He slipped along quietly and carefully. He entered an apartment that adjoined the one in which Lionel Cashel was sleeping.

He felt carefully along a wall. For some moments he ran his hand about without any effect: then there was a sound as of a spring unfastening, and a panel in the wall slid back.

For a moment the man stood quiet, then he cautiously looked in. A dim light was burning in the apartment. No sound save the breathing of the sleeping man broke the silence.

Quietly the villain made an entrance.

Crouching like a beast of prey, he crept to the bedside. Saturating a handkerchief with the chloroform, he held it to the nostrils of Lionel Cashel.

Lionel threw his arms wildly about once or twice, gasped, moaned, and then became unconscious.

He was in the power of his foe.

After that, the villain's task was easy. He bound his victim with the cord he had brought: he gagged him, with a sheet taken from the bed, so that it would be impossible for him to utter a cry.

## CHAPTER XX.

### EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF THE TRUE LIONEL CASHEL.

MAY 5, 185-. — I am twenty-three today. Perhaps on this, my birthday. I should look forward to the future with joyful anticipations; yet I cannot say that I do. I do not like this life of ease in this dreamy Italian city. I enjoyed myself far better at college in England. That was a new world to me. But that life soon ended: graduation day came. Farewell, merry England! What have I to which I may look forward? My father has taught me nothing of his art. However, if he had wished to do so, it would have been a hopeless task, probably; for I think I have nothing of his genius in that direction. I never had any desire to be an artist.

Why should I have? An artist! The life makes a dreamer of a man.

My father is a dreamer: he earns money, but he scatters it to the winds, as it were. He is rich in his great skill; but if that should fail him how poor indeed we should be!

If he would only consent that I should go forth into the world to strive, I believe I could make a man of myself. But he will not consent that I should leave him; and I cannot go without his blessing. All that binds me to Italy is his love, and a grave in the cemetery of an old cathedral: my mother's grave!

I barely remember her. She was beautiful: she loved me passionately. She died very young,—her years only twenty-one. I was a mere child then.

I have one consolation,—I can study. I love chemistry and medicine. I have read much: I am not ignorant upon those subjects. Mayhap my knowledge will some

day be useful to me. I love books far better than I could ever love painting.

JUNE 1. — Valasquez has been my father's secretary for three months. I still think father need never have employed him; for I could do all the work that he performs, and it would fall lightly upon me. I have no wish to be as much of a gentleman as father wishes to make me: in truth, my idea of a gentleman is not that of a man continually idle. Gladly would I have taken upon me the performance of all the duties of Valasquez.

Valasquez and I will never be very intimate: still, I have not now that dislike for him which I felt at first. I well remember the first time I beheld him. How like a crouching tiger he seemed to me! how his white teeth gleamed through his red lips! what an inscrutable expression there was in his wild black eyes!

Yes, though we can never be very great friends, I like him better. Perhaps I may have wronged him in my thoughts at first. Who can declare positively that the soul looks out through the face? I shall not condemn Valasquez because his features impressed me unfavorably at first sight. One thing is certain: he and my father get on famously together. In father's estimation he stands high. "Valasquez is such a perfect gentleman in his manners!" "Valasquez is so handsome!"

I believe those two things are facts; but I would not want to admit a man to my heart on those two recommendations alone. There! my dislike for Valasquez is not returning: that last sentence was only an expression of my caution. My father is so open-hearted,—so ignorant of the ways of the world! All men are brothers to him.

Valasquez speaks English wonderfully well for a foreigner. In fact, from his speech, he might be taken for English or American. He says he learned the language in America. Perhaps he did.

Why should I write so much about Valasquez? If he were a villain, he could not harm us: he is my father's secretary, nothing more.

JULY 15. — I consider this an eventful day. This morning my father came into my room with a letter bordered in black in his hand. He was somewhat pale and decomposed.

"My uncle, Herbert Cashel, is dead," he said.

"Who?" I cried.

"My uncle, Herbert Cashel, of America," he answered.

"I never knew that you had an uncle in America, or anywhere else," I replied. "I had the impression, father, that we had no living relatives."

"We have not now," he said, sadly enough. "Lionel, my son, I was a wild youth, and quarreled with my father: I chose to forget all of the blood. I was not absolutely wicked, however, and when I married your sainted mother she made a better man of me. But my father died shortly after I was married, and I never sought out this Herbert Cashel, who I suppose has kept track of me. You know I have some peculiarities."

I know that. Nothing truer of him could be spoken: but I had never dreamed that he, seemingly the most harmless and inoffensive of men, had been wild or wicked in his youth. How hard it is to gauge human nature! If anybody but himself had told me that, I would not have believed it. As for my impression about not having any relatives living, probably I had rather taken it for granted, as I had never heard him speak of any.

My father half turned to leave my room; but he paused, and looked at me.

"I had nearly forgotten," he said. "I have not told you all. I inherit from my uncle, Herbert Cashel, a property which I suppose is very large."

SEPT. 1. — I do not consider it strange that my father did not have any intention of leaving Italy at first. He loves his art: he loves Florence. He would prefer to go on in his old life, working half the time, — dreaming half.

And just here I write in sorrow that if my father had dreamed less he would have achieved more than he has. He has great talent; but he is content in climbing only to a certain height.

But at last my persuasions have prevailed, and he has consented to go to America. It is best so, I feel. He is getting well up in years. He paints as well now as ever, it is true; but it cannot always be so, and in America he will have a home that can never be taken from him.

We are almost ready to depart.

SEPT. 12. — Alas! I have no words to express my fear and suspense. On the eve of our departure for America, my father was

stricken with illness: it is fever. He now lies at the point of death. Another day will tell the tale: either his disease will change for the better, or — I cannot bear to think of that other alternative!

SEPT. 13. — My father is dead. Heaven pity me!

OCT. 1. — I am far out on the broad Atlantic. My father sleeps beneath the soft Italian skies. Alas!

Swift sails the vessel for America. America! I am an American by blood, yet I never beheld my native land. Is it strange that my heart swells when I think how soon it will be that I shall tread the shores of my country?

Henri Valasquez is on board the ship. I did not ask him to come; but after my father's death he pleaded that I should allow him to go with me to America. I could only tell him that doubtless there was room enough for us both in that country.

I treat him as a gentleman; still, as I have said before, we shall never be intimate.

OCT. 7. — I am on the ship "London," for Liverpool. How thankful I am that I live to pen this. My hand trembles as I attempt to write of the work of the traitor, Valasquez.

On the night of Oct. 5 I was on the deck of the good ship "Victoria." There was no moon, but myriads of stars shone in the heavens.

I had much to think about, — the father I had left behind me in sunny Italy; the future before me in America!

Henri Valasquez appeared at my side. He made some remarks about the beauty of the night. I rose to my feet. He was standing by the side of the ship, holding by the taffrail. I think — I am very certain — that we were unobserved. Beyond doubt he knew this.

"Look!" he cried. "I believe that is a shark."

I saw something white gleaming below. Naturally, I bent over the side of the ship. In one moment I felt myself falling. Then the cold waves of the sea swept about me and over me. I realized in a second what had occurred.

Valasquez, the villain, had thrown me overboard.

How I struggled, screamed, and swam! But the ship plunged on. My violent cries were unheard.



I was left far, far behind.

I became exhausted. I gave up to die.

But my hand touched a hard substance.

I grasped it. It was of sufficient body to sustain me. I know not positively, but it may have been the white object which Valasquez and I beheld from the ship,—part of a wreck, mayhap.

At any rate it was my salvation. With the hold of despair, I clung to it. Hours passed. Morning dawned. With the light of day, I strained my eyes over the illimitable ocean. Heaven was merciful! A ship was bearing toward me.

I was seen and saved!

Since then, till now, I have been quite ill.

But I am getting better.

Oh! the traitor Valasquez! He is a cowardly assassin. On equal footing I am twice his match, but he took me at a disadvantage. He cast me into the sea to become the food of a shark!

Have I guessed his dark plan? Yes! He will be Henri Valasquez no longer, but Lionel Cashel instead. I am being carried away from America! he is speeding swiftly toward it!

Once there, he will claim my inheritance.

And how well he will succeed! Who on shipboard knows aught of the history of him or me? No one! In my baggage he will find every proof that he will need to convince strangers that he is Lionel Cashel! In my country there will be no one to dispute his claims.

And I? Alas! I have but my diary, and a bill of exchange for a thousand dollars. These I had in an oiled-skin covering, else they had been destroyed by the water of the ocean.

How great the change! Liverpool, and not Baltimore! A struggle with poverty perhaps, not the master of a great estate!

The matchless villany of that man may cheat me forever out of my inheritance.

MARCH 9, 185—. — I am in Baltimore at last. After my arrival in England I was ill for months in a hospital. But at length I recovered my health, and now I am stout and hearty.

And how well has Henri Valasquez succeeded in his plot! He holds the great Cashel estate. How he has triumphed in his grand villany!

What can I do? I seem as though I, who am so bitterly wronged, am helpless. If I should attempt to arrest Valasquez, would my story be believed? I fear not. I am poor. I should be denounced as the impostor. My story would be called improbable, declared beyond belief. He has every advantage; and for me to battle against him would work nothing but disaster for me, I fear. He, rich in stolen wealth, powerful in a borrowed name, seems unassailable.

I must devise means to obtain money, more money than my paltry hundreds of dollars. Then perhaps I can successfully contend against him.

How strange it all appears.

JUNE 22, 185—. — It is nearly three years since my father's death. I have had a hard struggle, but my thousand dollars has grown to ten thousand. After all, there is pleasure in the struggle.

How my father would have mourned had he dreamed that his petted son was destined to be merely a cotton buyer in the Southern States of his own America.

Yet I could continue to labor for myself.

Were Valasquez justly entitled to the Cashel estate, I would never envy him. As it is, the villain must be driven out.

I am almost ready for the battle.

## THE BATTLE FOR THE CEDARS.—A STORY OF LOVE AND LAW.\*

BY PRESLEY W. MORRIS.

[NO. 2.—COMPLETE IN FOUR NUMBERS.]

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### BARBARA'S SUITOR.

The De Veres possessed a gentle horse, which Barbara Lindsley rode frequently. Occasionally she mounted him, and galloped off over the country alone.

A couple of evenings after her adventure, she had Sultan brought out, and, mounting him, rode away unaccompanied. Along the road, through lanes, for four or five miles she went. Finally she turned Sultan's head toward home, with the intention of riding thither.

A couple of miles from De Vere's residence she was letting Sultan trot leisurely along when she heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs behind her. She did not turn her head, but very soon the horse and rider overtook her. It was the master of The Cedars.

"Good-evening, Miss Lindsley," he exclaimed.

Barbara returned his salutation, and he slackened the pace of his horse, riding along beside her.

"You are much improved," she said.

"I am very much so," said the master of The Cedars; "in fact, as well as ever. However, I have not yet driven that animal which ran away with me."

Other remarks followed. The man rode with Barbara to De Vere's. He assisted her to dismount. Politeness demanded that she should ask him to enter; and she did so.

"Thank you," he replied, accepting her invitation.

Entering, Barbara ushered him into the parlor. As it chanced, Victoria De Vere was there; so Barbara excused herself for a time. In her own room the thought presented itself to her that she would prefer to stay away.

"But I will go down," she murmured firmly. "This man may hate me some day. I am sure I will not take the first step toward raising a feud between us. No: my treatment of him shall be as civil as I can make it."

Then she went down, the added color that her ride had given her still in her cheeks. The gaze of the master of The Cedars rested upon her admiringly. However, she did not notice this, for she was not looking at him.

An hour or two passed pleasantly enough, and then Mr. Lionel Cashel took his leave.

But that was not the end. It became apparent very shortly that the master of The Cedars had come to the determination of being on as friendly terms as possible with the De Veres and their guest. There came a formal invitation for them all to dine with him, the day being set.

"I think we had better accept," Robert De Vere said, when the question of accepting the invitation was being discussed. "We shall probably be neighbors to Cashel for years; and we may as well cultivate friendly relations with him as not."

Then he turned to Barbara Lindsley.

"Miss Lindsley, will you accept?" he asked.

"I believe I would prefer to be excused," Barbara returned.

Then Victoria pointedly declared that unless Barbara would go, neither would she. Barbara was finally induced to give her consent.

And so, on the appointed day, they all went to The Cedars.

Barbara's emotions when she first entered the gray stone mansion were similar to what they had been when she first looked upon it. The apartments were spacious, the furniture luxurious, but rather quaint and old fashioned. However, this only added to

[\*Entered according to Act of Congress, by THOMES & TALBOT, Boston, Mass., in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington.]

the fascination the place possessed for Barbara.

The dinner was magnificent, and was served by colored servants. This latter item was a matter of course in a Virginia mansion.

Nothing of particular importance occurred previous to or during dinner. In spite of herself, Barbara rather enjoyed the occasion.

After the meal was finished, the master of The Cedars showed his guests over a portion of his grounds. Barbara said nothing about her adventure with the dog.

The visit ended at last. The guests, accompanied by the host, were going down a walk in front of the mansion to their carriage, when a huge dog, fierce and vicious looking, ran across their path. Barbara beheld him, and, though there was no present danger, her heart sank in terror, and all the sensations of that day of peril returned in some degree to her,—for this was the brute that had attacked her. The sight of him brought back the horror of that terrible scene. She had thought that he was dead; and the thought had been a comfort to her. Was every association of The Cedars to be connected with this monster? Could his always crossing her path be an omen of doom? Barbara was not given to superstitious thoughts, but the idea made her shudder.

"What a terribly vicious-looking creature that dog of yours is," said Robert De Vere to the master of The Cedars.

"Yes, he is," was the careless reply. "I keep him chained generally; but here lately I allow him to run loose occasionally. After all, I have a kind of affection for the brute."

At that moment Barbara glanced at the man. Something in his expression reminded her of his tigrish dog; and she shuddered again.

Only a few days after that, the master of The Cedars called at the De Vere mansion once more. As formerly, a few hours were spent agreeably enough. But deeper and deeper was the impression growing in Barbara Lindsley's heart that she could never like this man. When his calls began to be repeated frequently, a fear came to her that made her sick in soul. Did he intend to make love to her sweet friend Victoria? Could there be a possibility that Victoria might learn to love him? The very thought

filled her with strange dread. Yet why should it?

She had no tangible reason for her opinion of the master of The Cedars, she knew. Nothing but the consciousness, confessed to no one but herself, that there was something fierce, vicious, tiger-like, about the man; a consciousness that would cause her to withhold from him any one that she loved, even as she would withhold that one from a beast of prey.

Then came the question, what could she do? What indeed? Should she state to Victoria her impressions? What would that avail? She had no foundation for any such statement save her own vague fears of evil. If Victoria had aught of regard for the man, what could it avail for her to say simply that she believed him to be a bad man? Love had never been uprooted in any such manner. Victoria was gentle and affectionate, it was true; but if she loved a man would she cling to him any the less firmly for her gentleness? No.

Barbara was compelled to acknowledge to herself that she was powerless in this matter,—that she could only let affairs take their course. It was highly probable that Victoria would care nothing for the master of The Cedars; but Barbara believed that it was not so with him in regard to Victoria.

Yet, after all, she was utterly mistaken. Her fears for her friend were as baseless as castles of air. Victoria filled scarcely a thought of the master of The Cedars.

Some invited guests came to De Vere's. Among them was a young man by the name of Vincent Sherwood. He had met Victoria before; and she had impressed him strongly. Now he was evidently very much attracted by her, and his attentions were rather marked.

Barbara expected to see the master of The Cedars angry with jealousy. She was disappointed. She saw that the advances Vincent Sherwood was making did not affect him, and were not regarded. He came to De Vere's as often as ever, and seemed to rather like Vincent.

Barbara began to understand that she had been mistaken, and for Victoria's sake she rejoiced greatly; and at last she was made fully aware that the master of the Cedars cared naught for Victoria.

One afternoon he came, and, as it happened, found her alone in the parlor. He seated himself, and began to converse; but

he grew abstracted in manner, and seemed unable to keep up his share of the conversation.

"Excuse me," said Barbara presently, "and I will summon some of the family."

She rose to her feet; but the master of The Cedars sprang before her.

"Wait, Miss Lindsley," he exclaimed: "it is you I wish."

Barbara's gaze sought his face questioningly. His eyes were gleaming upon her, and in an instant she read the truth. How terribly she had been mistaken! Her strength seemed to leave her, and she sank into her seat with a kind of sob. She lifted her hand with a deprecatory gesture; but the man heeded her not.

"Miss Lindsley, I love you!" he cried. "Will you be my wife?"

Suddenly strength and calmness came to her.

"Mr. Cashel, you surprise me," she said. "I did not dream of this."

"Tell me: do you love me?" exclaimed the man.

Barbara saw that it was best to end it all as soon as possible.

"I am sorry for you, Mr. Cashel," she said firmly; "but I do not love you. I cannot be your wife."

"You love some one else," he exclaimed angrily.

His white teeth showed; his eyes blazed upon her with a wicked light. Barbara Lindsley could not but remember the beast that had tried to take her life.

"No," she returned: "I love no one else."

But a rich, musical voice echoed in her ears, and a pair of eyes magnetic in their power came before her for an instant. She had spoken truly; yet a possibility flashed through her mind. Her hero, her knight, might win her could he but have a chance.

"If you love no one else, then you shall learn to love me," said the master of The Cedars.

"I encourage no false hopes," said the girl coldly. "I never can, Mr. Cashel."

"Why not?" he questioned, more angrily than before. "I have no marks upon me to make you hate me, have I? You speak strongly when you say that in all the future there is no hope,—more strongly than the occasion demands."

Barbara sprang to her feet, anger in her eyes.

"If you have finished, Mr. Cashel, you will please excuse me," she said haughtily. "I do not choose to be insulted."

The man's anger cooled.

"I beg your pardon," he said, humbly enough. "I will go myself."

And he left Barbara's presence. She ran to her room.

"Oh, why does he love me?" she cried, bursting into a passion of tears. "Between us there is nothing in common. I hate him! I hate him! and I cannot help it. I have been blind, utterly blind; for the possibility of this never came to me. It fills my soul with dismay. Oh, why does he love me?"

## CHAPTER IX.

### TWICE RESCUED.

The master of The Cedars ceased to come to the De Vere residence. Once when Barbara was out riding he passed her. As he did so, he gave her merely a cold glance.

The first of August approached. Barbara made an announcement to the De Veres.

"I am going to Baltimore," she said.

"You don't mean that," cried Victoria. "I thought you were going to remain with us till winter."

"I positively must go in a week," Barbara replied seriously; "but, Victoria, I will try to return by the middle of August."

"You will try!" Victoria exclaimed. "One would suppose that it might be impossible. Barbara, I will never forgive you if you do not come back and remain until Christmas. Unless you promise me that, I will not let you go at all."

"I promise to return; but" —

"I want no conditions," interrupted Victoria imperatively. "Promise in full."

"I will return; but after that we will decide how long I am to remain," persisted Barbara.

One pleasant summer afternoon, late in July, Robert De Vere drove Barbara over to the station. The train rushed up, and she found herself on board. Then she was away.

Several hours passed. Night came down over the earth. The train plunged on through the darkness.

All of the incidents that had occurred while she was at the De Vere's passed before Barbara's memory, from the adventure with the vicious dog to the declaration of the master of The Cedars. The great gray

stone mansion, to think of which always thrilled her, because she knew it should have been her home, rose up before her imagination. It pleased her to think of The Cedars, and caused her to shudder to remember the possessor of the estate.

Barbara became wearied. Nature asserted herself, and the girl fell into a slight doze. She had a terrible dream. She imagined that the master of The Cedars was pursuing her, his face hideous and distorted, she fleeing before him in dread. Suddenly her flight was stopped by her coming to a steep precipice. She glanced down into the yawning gulf below her feet, and beheld his fierce, vicious-looking dog, his red mouth open, his white, cruel fangs gleaming. With a wild scream she threw herself from the precipice, thinking that the monster below could not be more cruel than the one above. There was an answering scream, and then Barbara awoke. She found herself standing erect, cold chills of terror running over her. The shriek of the locomotive had awakened her. There was a fierce, grating sound beneath her feet, and in an instant there came a terrific crash. Darkness seemed to envelop Barbara, and she became unconscious.

But consciousness returned.

All was blackness to Barbara. It appeared to her that the weight of a world was pressing upon her. She realized that a terrible accident had occurred, and tried to scream, but could not.

However, she was not to die thus. Strong arms tore away the debris above her, and fresh air blew in upon her. She breathed it gratefully, freely. She was lifted up, and a hand placed over her head.

"I live!" whispered Barbara.

A man raised her in his arms, and carried her swiftly away from the wrecked train. He placed her down upon a soft, grassy bank.

"Do you feel as though you were badly injured?" asked a rich, musical voice.

That voice! Barbara knew it in a moment; and even in that moment her heart thrilled.

"O Mr. Victor!" she cried. Then she burst into tears. "I think I am not much hurt," she added, between her sobs.

Mr. Victor—for it was he—stood hesitating for a moment. Then he burst out.

"Is it possible? Miss Lindsley?"

"Yes, it is possible," Barbara murmured.

"How happy I am to be of service to you again," he exclaimed.

"O Mr. Victor! hasten yonder," cried the girl. "Probably you can aid some one else. I will remain here until you return. Indeed, I am feeling very well."

Humanity dictated that she should be obeyed, and Victor hastened back to the wrecked car. After an hour or so of hard labor, he returned to Barbara.

"All has been done that can be," he said. "The accident has been quite a severe one. Some lives are lost, and several persons are injured."

Barbara was on her feet.

"How do you feel by this time?" Mr. Victor asked.

"Very well," returned the girl. "All the injuries I have received are a few bruises not worth mentioning."

"Thank Heaven for that!" muttered Victor, under his breath.

There was a time of waiting, weary and disagreeable enough, surely, and then a train thundered along to their relief. The dead and wounded were carried on board. Mr. Victor assisted Barbara into a car.

"All ready," was announced. And they were once more in motion.

After all, Barbara felt weary and sick. Victor saw this.

"Let me aid you," he said gently.

He caused Barbara's head to lean on his shoulder. The girl could do nothing but allow it to rest there.

"Railway accidents happen scarcely once in a lifetime to one," said Victor gently.

Barbara understood his delicacy, and in her heart she thanked him. However, the man was experiencing a strange pleasure. But he said nothing of that. If he felt that it would be joy to have this girl rest upon him forever, he realized that this was not the time to speak of it. He was too noble to take advantage of Barbara's situation to pour into her ears the story that was throbbing at his heart.

Barbara was better presently.

"How did it happen, Mr. Victor," she asked, "that you were at hand to rescue me?"

"I was in a forward car of the train," he answered. "When the train was thrown from the track, the car in which I sat was not very badly damaged. I, like many others, was uninjured. I was but performing the part of humanity when Providence di-

rected me to you. The rest you know, Miss Lindsley."

"Yes," assented Barbara.

Baltimore was reached finally.

"You have friends here?" Mr. Victor asked, when he had procured a cab.

"I have," Barbara returned.

Then she gave Victor the necessary directions. Shortly he gave her into the charge of her friends.

"I will call in the morning, and see how you are getting along," he said, as he bade her good-night.

Barbara retired to rest, and slept reasonably well. When she came down to breakfast, in the morning, she was slightly pale, but not looking very ill.

"Why, Barbara!" cried Mrs. Holland, her hostess, "I am very glad to see that you are not much the worse for your terrible accident."

Other members of the family expressed their sympathy.

It was eleven o'clock when Victor called. He reiterated Mrs. Holland's remark.

"I have been a great deal of trouble to you, Mr. Victor," Barbara said, during the course of the conversation. "I owe you a debt of gratitude that I can never repay. You have saved my life twice."

"Never mind," Victor said gayly. "You overrate my services."

But the words that he spoke soon afterward were not uttered gayly, but seriously instead.

"I shall be repaid a thousand times," he said, "if I can only feel that you think of me occasionally, Miss Lindsley."

"I should be very ungrateful if I did not do so, Mr. Victor," Barbara murmured, in a low tone.

When Victor rose to depart, he said, —

"Miss Lindsley, I take the train for Richmond at five o'clock this evening."

He reached out his hand, and Barbara gave him hers.

"Good-by," he said.

"Good-by," she returned.

He held her hand in his for a moment, then lifted it suddenly to his lips, and was gone.

"Does fate throw us together?" mused Barbara. "Is he indeed to be my knight, my hero, always at hand in my times of need?"

Barbara remembered that the friends whom she had left behind would be uneasy

on her account, so she telegraphed to them that she was safe.

And she called on Mr. Wylie.

## CHAPTER X.

### AT THE GATES OF DEATH.

"You are looking badly, Mr. Cashel," said Mr. Arthur Evans.

"I am feeling bad enough here lately, the mischief knows," returned the master of The Cedars. "I believe that this cursed suit is wearing on my mind."

"Very probable," answered Evans. "I suppose you have scarcely recovered from that accident of yours yet; and of course you cannot avoid a certain share of uneasiness about the suit. The two cause you to look haggard, when there is really nothing serious the matter with you."

This conversation occurred in the library at The Cedars. The two men had been conversing about business affairs, but, having finished, had time to think of something else. It was a few days previous to the time for the great suit of Cashel *versus* Cashel.

The two continued to converse. Their subjects were unimportant, however. The library door had been locked; but after the business conversation was ended the master of The Cedars unfastened it, and left it open.

"Dinner is ready, Massa Cashel," announced the servant, appearing at the door presently.

"Come, Evans," said the master of The Cedars.

It was a table groaning with dainties to which the two men sat down. The meal seemed lonesome enough, truly, with only the two to eat; but the meals at The Cedars were generally more lonely still, — solitary ones, with only the master sitting down to partake. He spoke this sentiment.

"I get to feeling devilishly lonesome sometimes, Evans," he said.

"You might marry," suggested Evans. "In fact, Mr. Cashel, I am surprised that you do not. I dare say that any young lady in the country would be delighted to be mistress of The Cedars."

A frown darkened the brow of Evans's host.

"Satan take the women!" he cried angrily. "I do not wish to be bothered with

any of them here, I'm positive. One of them would have everything in confusion in less than a week."

Mr. Arthur Evans said no more in that line. He was quite acute enough to perceive that the subject was disagreeable.

"I believe Cashel has been disappointed in love," was his thought. "That seems strange, i' faith! I should suppose that 'most any woman would rejoice at the chance of getting Cashel, and becoming mistress of this grand old place."

But Evans had no measure by which to estimate the character of such a woman as Barbara Lindsley.

"Have wine, Evans," said the master of The Cedars.

However, Mr. Arthur Evans drank wine lightly. He was all the more dangerous a rascal from the fact that he kept his head clear, cool, and steady. It was a sacrifice on his part too; for he liked wine. He noticed that the master of The Cedars drank deeply and frequently: he had noticed that fact before.

Dinner was over at last, and the two returned to the library.

"Have a cigar, Evans," said the host, producing a box of fragrant Havanas.

Evans did not drink much wine, but he delighted in smoking. He considered himself a judge of a good cigar.

An hour or two passed, and then Evans said,—

"It is time for me to be off, Mr. Cashel."

"Can't you stay all night, Evans?"

"No: I must return to Fairmount."

Evans's horse was brought out, and he rode away. The master of The Cedars saw him off, and then returned to the library. He had ordered in wine. He poured out a glass, and swallowed it at a gulp.

"I am terribly thirsty this afternoon," he muttered.

The master of The Cedars did look badly. There was reason for it, for fever was coursing through his veins. This was even a better reason than the weight of the "cursed suit" upon his mind. And a great quantity of wine, swallowed in large draughts, is not beneficial to a man threatened with fever. But the man was not aware of the fact that he was so threatened. However, if he had been aware of it, he might not have drank any the less wine.

He poured out another glass, and swallowed it: another and another followed. It

was the fever in his veins that made him so very thirsty. Presently he went to pour, and there was no wine remaining. He reached the bell-rope, and pulled it furiously.

"You are devilish slow," he cried, when Sant appeared. "Bring"—

He paused, and turned around suddenly. His gaze became fixed, resting on the wall apparently.

"Who are you?" he muttered, his voice hoarse and strange.

Then, as though his question had been answered, he cried,—

"It is false! I say it is false! You are an interloper, an impostor! Ha, ha! You must get out, or I will have you thrown from my door."

He turned to Sant, who stood listening in astonishment.

"Sant, show that man out," he said hurriedly.

"But, Massa Cashel, dar a'n't no man dar," Sant replied, beginning to tremble.

"No man there! Ha, ha! are you blind? Look there."

The master of The Cedars raised his hand, and pointed at vacancy.

"Now do you see him?" he asked. "Show him out, I tell you."

"But, Massa Cashel, I don't see no man dar," protested Sant, in frightened tones.

"Villain, you lie!" screamed the man, in a rage. "Ha, ha! You are leagued with him, devil! Begone, or I will kill you!"

He seized a glass, and hurled it at Sant, who sprang out into the hall. The glass struck the wall of the library, and was shattered to fragments.

The master of The Cedars turned again.

"Now, base impostor," he shrieked, "you shall go, or I will choke the life from you. You will not? Then you shall die!"

He sprang forward with a wild laugh, only to fall prostrate to the floor. He laid there, moaning piteously.

Meantime, Sant had called help, and ventured back. The man was powerless to do harm now, and he was lifted into bed. A physician was summoned as soon as possible. It was Dr. Gower. When he arrived he found the master of The Cedars in a raging fever.

"A bad case," Dr. Gower muttered, as he examined him.

Then he had the sick man undressed. The master of The Cedars struggled fran-

tically, but the task was finally accomplished.

A night, a day, passed. The sick man tossed, muttered and groaned. His veins flowed liquid fire, as it were. On the night of the fifth day the fever was the highest, and the ravings of the sick man were wild and strange.

"Ah, ha!" he would moan; "the deep sea tells no tales."

No answering sound save the tick of the long clock in the apartment.

"A shark! a shark to devour you, Cashel," the master of The Cedars cried.

Dr. Gower was present in attendance.

"Be calm, Cashel," he said soothingly. "You are not on the sea, but in your bed; and it is impossible that sharks should harm you."

The sick man seemed to catch but one idea.

"The sea?" he said. "Ay! far down in the depths of the sea."

Then he lay for a time silent save for his moans.

"What! another claimant for The Cedars?" he shouted. "Another beside that woman? Who are you? A Cashel? It is not so: you lie!"

The master of The Cedars clutched the pillows, while his face grew livid.

"Begone!" he screamed; "go back to your home in the ocean's caves. You think to frighten me; but I fear you not. Begone, I tell you! Away! and haunt me no longer."

The physician took the sick man's hands, and held them in his grasp. For a time he was quieted; but not long could he be kept calm.

"Hark, Cashel!" he muttered: "listen to the wash of the waters about the ship's bow. How we are rushing on! There is no sound to disturb the solitude of the sea except what our ship is making. Did you see that? I dare say it was the gleam of the white belly of a shark. Ugh! ugly monster."

The voice of the master of The Cedars rose to a shriek.

"Man overboard?" he cried. Ay! it is true; but he fell overboard. Ha, ha, Cashel! you bade farewell to the fair Italian skies; but you will never shout greeting to American shores. Ha, ha! a queer choice: you wanted to search for sharks, and ugly,

slimy, creeping things. How the ocean roars above you!"

His ravings changed.

"A wife, Evans?" he said, with a mocking laugh. "In truth, I had been thinking something of that myself; but the queen of women—now, Evans, you need not look surprised. Ah! where was I?"

"Of course, Evans, it is something to be mistress of The Cedars," he continued, after a moment's pause; "but then methinks she has heard of the great suit of Cashel versus Cashel. Wait till I win that, and then I shall woo to a different end. Evans, bend close: she shall be my wife. Oh, ho! those glorious eyes shall beam on me. Ay! I will conquer her yet, by some means or other. Evans, I never fail in what I undertake; and I swear,—ha, ha!—I swear she shall be mine."

Such were the ravings of the master of The Cedars; but they could not last always. At last he sank into a slumber that seemed almost as deep as that of the grave. Dr. Gower sat counting the minutes, for the crisis of the disease was at hand. The gates of death were open, as it were, and the master of The Cedars would either pass through or awake in his right senses. He was so very close to those gates that the dark wings of the angel within were almost overshadowing him.

Hours passed.

Far in the night the man opened his eyes. Dr. Gower bent over him anxiously.

He spoke.

"Dr. Gower," he said feebly.

"You have been very ill, Cashel," said the physicians soothingly. "You are better now. Close your eyes and sleep, and all will be well with you."

The master of The Cedars kept his eyes on Dr. Gower for a moment; then he sighed, closed his eyes, and was asleep again.

His breathing was easy and regular. The unnatural flush had gone from his face, leaving it very pale, however. The master of The Cedars had been down to the gates of death, but was returning therefrom. Morning dawned, and still he slept. At length he awoke. Reason still held her sway. The change in the disease was indeed greatly for the better.



## CHAPTER XI.

### AFTER THE SUIT.

"Sant, come here!"

The master of The Cedars was speaking to his slave.

"What am wanted, Massa Cashel?" asked Sant, obeying.

"Sant, how long have I been ill?"

"Deed, Massa Cashel, about eight or 'leben days, I 'spect," was the answer. "You see, I don't know, 'cisely, for I hab n't kept berry close count ob de time. Ef you had asked de doctor, he could tell you, I s'pose."

It was a few days after the change in the disease of the master of The Cedars. During these passing days, he had been in a feeble condition, content to lie at ease, and make no mental effort whatever. His business cares had not harassed him. His hold on life had been too slender for him to take an interest in anything.

But he was growing stronger.

"I suppose the doctor does know," he returned to Sant, in a tone of annoyance. "Can you tell me, then, what day of the week it is?"

Sant hung his head. He was still puzzled.

"Deed I can't, Massa Cashel. You see, I done keep no 'count of such tings."

"Be off, then, you villain, and ask somebody who does know something."

Evidently, the master of The Cedars was recovering rapidly. Sant started to leave the apartment. At that moment, however, Dr. Gower entered.

"Doctor, is this August?" cried the master of The Cedars eagerly.

"This is August," was the doctor's reply.

"What day?"

"The fifth."

"Doctor, are you acquainted with Evans, a Fairmount lawyer?"

"No, I can't say that I am," said Dr. Gower, rubbing his head as though he were trying to remember something that had slipped his recollection.

"Massa Cashel," interrupted Sant, glad that he could at last impart some information, "dot dar lawyer hab been here three or four times since you hab been sick."

"Oh, I remember, now," said Dr. Gower.

"The man was here wanting to see you, but I positively forbade it each time. The last time, I gave him a glimpse of you, and I think he went away satisfied that it was useless to talk about interviewing you. Ha, ha! he might as well have thought of interviewing an insane asylum!"

And jolly Dr. Gower laughed, as though the idea was very amusing to him.

"Doctor, I want you to despatch one of my servants to Fairmount immediately, for Evans," said the master of The Cedars. "Please write him a note, telling him I wish to see him on business."

"But I am not going to have any business conversations held here, yet," asserted Dr. Gower. "Cashel, do you wish to have a relapse?"

"Doctor, I am in suspense," pleaded the master of The Cedars, "and a few words from Evans will relieve me of it."

"If you will make that all, I will send," Dr. Gower said.

He repaired to the library, and wrote the note to Evans. He had become quite well acquainted with the servants at The Cedars, and mounting one, he despatched him with the missive. He returned to the sick-room. He gave some directions, and then, taking his hat and cane, departed.

"Sant," said the master of The Cedars, "bring me some wine."

"But Massa Cashel, de doctor says"—

"Satan take the doctor! Is he master here, or am I? Bring me some wine, I say!"

Sant still hesitated.

"Be off, you black villain!" cried his master.

"What 's this?" exclaimed Dr. Gower, at the door. As it chanced, he had overheard the order of the master of The Cedars. "Wine, eh! Mr. Cashel, listen to me! A bottle of wine might be the death of you! You can not have it!"

Then he turned to Sant, and said sternly, —

"If you bring your master any wine, I will have you cowhided, sir. I shall see that he has as much as he needs and no more."

Evidently, Dr. Gower was slightly angry.

Sant glanced first at him and then at his master, looking as though he was in some thing of a dilemma. The physician took his cane.

But Sant had no trouble, for the master

of The Cedars was frightened out of drinking wine, for the time at least. He was not quite ready to die!

Scarcely an hour after the departure of Dr. Gower, Evans was ushered into the presence of the master of The Cedars.

"I met your messenger, Mr. Cashel," he said. "I am very glad to know that you are better."

The master of The Cedars motioned him to a seat.

"Well, Evans," he said, his breath coming in quick gasps, in his great anxiety, "was the suit of Cashel *versus* Cashel, tried?"

"Yes," said Evans. "Your presence was not necessary, and I concluded that the case might as well proceed, as not. You remember you told me the suspense was wearing on you. There was no burden of proof resting upon us; it was necessary for the plaintiff to make out her case. So we proceeded."

"And what was the result?"

Evans hesitated for a moment.

"Speak, man!" cried the master of The Cedars wildly. "Would you have me die with suspense?"

"The plaintiff gained the suit," said Evans slowly.

"Satan take old Wylie and his client!"

"Pray do not excite yourself, Mr. Cashel," exclaimed Evans. "I think that in all probability this decision will amount to nothing. I gave immediate notice that the case would be appealed."

"And what did they pretend to prove?" asked the master of The Cedars, more calmly than might have been expected.

"They first produced what they claimed was evidence of Robert Cashel's marriage in some old English church. Then they tried to show how he placed his wife and child on board a ship bound for America. After that, they produced a man by the name of Gorman, who swore that he was a sailor on the ship; that it was wrecked, and he and the claimant, then an infant, were thrown out upon the shore alive, they being the only two persons saved from the wreck. He testified positively to the identity of the babe. Next, some people by the name of Ogden gave in their testimony. According to their tale, the babe was found in its mother's arms on the sea-coast, and their story coincides with Gorman's. They gave a history of the claimant from the stormy

night of the shipwreck till the present. Additionally, some infant's clothing was produced, old and faded, with the word Cashel worked upon it, in embroidered letters. That's the substance of the whole matter, I believe."

"And the whole is a base fabrication," muttered the master of The Cedars. "Ha, ha! a pretty story, truly, to work upon the sympathies of a judge and jury!"

Mr. Arthur Evans was a rascal, but not a fool by any means, and in his heart was a consciousness of the strength of the new claimant's case. He was forced to the belief that unless resort should be had to some desperate means, his client would be as utterly defeated in the future as he had in the past.

However, he did not, at that time, give utterance to his thoughts.

The master of The Cedars recovered rapidly, and was soon out of the care of Dr. Gower.

## CHAPTER XII.

### HERBERT CASHEL'S WILL.

During the course of the next week or two, Evans was frequently at The Cedars. His conversations with the master of the estate were earnest and confidential.

What could be done to hold the property that the deceased Robert Cashel had left?

That was the question that harassed lawyer and client.

"There is an urgent demand that something be done," Evans said.

And the master of The Cedars was compelled to realize, unwilling though he might be, what a precarious hold he had upon the estate. He writhed and cursed under the consciousness, but the fact impressed itself firmly upon him nevertheless.

So lawyer and client came to understand each other. Bravado would avail nothing. It was best to set it down as a fact that the plaintiff had a good case, that the proofs in her favor were strong, and to proceed accordingly.

On a hot day toward the last of August, the master of The Cedars and Evans were in the library.

It was comfortable enough at The Cedars. The great, gray stone mansion was pleasantly cool, even in the hottest days of summer.

"By the heart of Pluto, I will match

them yet!" the master of The Cedars was crying. "A devilish pretty idea it is, that a man can not touch anything that belongs to him. Bonds, stocks, all enjoined! Old Wylie thinks he is very cunning, but I will" —

"I presume that you could scarcely draw a check upon the bank, Mr. Cashel, calling for your own private funds, without finding an injunction in your way," Evans said, interrupting. "Ay, Wylie is pursuing his advantage to the utmost."

"I tell you, Evans, that means must be taken to checkmate them. We must devise some measure that will leave no doubt of the end of all this being in our favor. If the higher court confirms that cursed decision, we are defeated. I cannot afford to run any risks!"

"I suppose matters must take their course," said Evans gloomily. "Our consideration of the matter here lately, has been like butting our heads against a stone wall. What can we do? is a question that balks us continually. If Herbert Cashel had only left a will in your favor, then we could defy the world."

The master of The Cedars rose to his feet, a peculiar expression on his face, and began to pace back and forth. A will in his favor! The idea affected him strangely. His mind was carried away for the instant to a far different scene from that in which he was taking part. He stood on a ship, and a white face looked up out of the waters of the sea at him!

Then a widely different thought, suggested by those words, an idea of something that *might be accomplished in the future*, came to him. He recovered himself. He walked to the side of Evans, and folding his arms stood silent for a minute. He smiled, and that tiger-like expression of his was apparent. His eyes gleamed with a baleful light. He spoke, uttering his words slowly and deliberately.

"Evans, why can there not be a will in my favor?"

Evans started, but he did not affect to misunderstand the question.

"I have been thinking of that," he answered, "but" —

"Well?"

"It will be a difficult and dangerous plan."

"Evans, the end to be reached will justify that we encounter difficulty and danger."

"The courts will look very unfavorably upon a will produced at this late hour," Evans said. "Ay, Mr. Cashel! even if it were genuine, it would be viewed with suspicion. It would take a very strong document to stand the tests to which a writing purporting to be the will of Herbert Cashel would now be subjected: then there would have to be witnesses."

"Gold will buy the names," said the master of The Cedars; "or we could use those of some dead persons, and establish their death. We can obtain the names of men to the falseness of whose signatures no man could swear. That part will not be difficult."

"We might be fully successful," Evans said.

"I am a Cashel," continued the master of The Cedars: "who would dare attach suspicion of fraud to my name? With my uncle's name successfully counterfeited, there is no danger of detection. Evans, the plan seems feasible."

"But what story could be told as to the will being kept out of sight so long?"

"Think of this great stone house. In how many secret nooks might it lie concealed? ay! till it should moulder to dust; if it should not by chance be discovered. Evans, if we undertake this, and are successful, I promise that it shall be a mine of gold to you, — as good as that."

The eyes of Evans gleamed. That last argument was worthy of attention. If this scheme should win, what a hold indeed he would have upon the master of The Cedars!

"I believe the plan is worth attempting," he said cautiously. "At any rate, when I return to my office I will lock myself in, and shape a document for your examination. I think I can manage about the names of witnesses, as I can obtain access to many musty old legal documents in the clerk's office at Fairmount. I presume I can imitate any signatures I may find there accurately enough. Then Herbert Cashel's name will be all that will be needed."

"I have no fear but that you can counterfeit that successfully, Evans," said the master of The Cedars. "I am aware of the fact that you are very skillful with the pen."

And so this piece of villainy was arranged. For once, Mr. Arthur Evans was in the humor of getting a little outside the limits of the law in his rascality. But the

stakes were high, and, like the master of The Cedars, Evans thought that the risk need not be very great. The suit might be lost, after all; but then it would be very difficult to fix the crime upon him or his client.

A Cashel would be a participator with him. Was it likely that the new claimant, if successful, would attempt to initiate criminal proceedings against the master of The Cedars? a Cashel try to make a Cashel a felon? Certainly not.

These were the thoughts of Mr. Arthur Evans, as he galloped rapidly toward Fairmount after having left The Cedars.

"But Mr. Lionel Cashel must pay something in advance," he muttered; "a good round sum. Under the circumstances, Herbert Cashel's will is worth a good many thousand dollars. I do not doubt, either, but that Cashel has plenty of gold concealed about that old stone mansion. He must pay."

Then Evans chuckled as he thought of the influence he would wield over the master of The Cedars in the future.

But if Mr. Arthur could have known the thoughts of the man whose tool he was to be, he would not have been so jubilant.

"Fool!" muttered the master of The Cedars, after he was left alone. "I can read him: he thinks he will have me in his power when he has accomplished what I ask. Let him not presume; let him beware. He cannot attempt to rule me, and live. If he will be satisfied with a reasonable reward for his services, good; if not,—ah! after death the secrets of this life are not spoken."

The night came. The master of The Cedars ordered the lamps lighted in the library, and then closing the doors locked them. Frequently he did this, but on this evening he had a better reason than usual for doing so: he wished to be entirely alone to think and plot. The schemes that were to secure The Cedars to him forever must be cunningly devised. There was danger. Snares might trip his feet, and, falling, he might lose all. All of his and Evans's plans must fit together, or the result would be disastrous, fatal. It would be a bold stroke, this scheme of the forged will.

The thought made him grow pale; then he muttered,—

"Bah! am I a child? This is not the first time I have run risks. When have I

failed in my plans? Never. I will let the past be a token of my success in the future."

His mutterings ceased for a while; but presently he added something similar to a portion of Evans's thoughts.

"Besides, if she is a true Cashel, she will never attempt to bring disgrace upon the name. She can never dream"—

The man stopped his mutterings, growing paler than before. His own thoughts seemed to frighten him. It could not be that a mere idea of the peril of his undertaking was causing him to grow white: he had considered that before. What was it, then? He had been muttering the name of Cashel, drawing the inference that one of that name would not wish to bring shame upon it. Do men start and tremble generally at the mere mention of their own names?

The master of The Cedars rose to his feet; and paced the library. Directly, however, he went to a quaintly carved writing-desk, and sat down by it: he opened a drawer, and idly turned over the papers within.

That old desk had been the property of Herbert Cashel. Doubtless he had brought it from across the sea. It was a piece of rare workmanship, carved in a peculiar design.

The master of The Cedars examined drawer after drawer in a sort of mechanical, uninterested manner. All the papers that they contained were familiar to him, and he ran over them abstractedly and listlessly. At length he came to a drawer that he had always considered the most secret of all. He opened it, but when he tried to close it some papers caught between it and the carved work of the desk.

"Curse the drawer!" cried the man impatiently.

He reached his hand under to press down the papers: it touched some slight protuberance upon which he thus accidentally pressed. There was a rattling noise, and a sound as though a small door had accidentally dropped. The master of The Cedars ran his hand all through the drawer, but found no explanation of the sounds. Puzzled, he sprang to his feet, and walked around the desk, examining it as he went.

"Seemingly there is some mystery here," he muttered.

He was interested.

He reached the opposite side of the desk. The mystery was apparent.

A small panel that had appeared to be a part of the carved work had dropped down, and thus was another drawer discovered, which the master of The Cedars pulled out.

It was full of papers.

With some curiosity, the man began to look over them.

"Unimportant," he muttered, as he proceeded.

He reached a document presently over which he glanced hurriedly as he had done the rest. An exclamation escaped him, and the drawer, with all its remaining contents, dropped to the floor. The man's eyes lighted with a wild blaze of triumph, and the tiger-like expression showed on his face.

He read the paper through from beginning to end carefully.

"Ha, ha!" he laughed wildly: "I wonder who will win now, — whether I, or old Wylie and his client?"

## CHAPTER IX.

### VICTOR'S QUEST.

A man stepped off the train at Fairmount, and hastened to a hotel. He registered his name as L. Victor, and was no other than Barbara Lindsley's hero. August was nearly past.

After Victor had eaten his dinner, he returned to the office of the hotel.

"Please direct me to the court-house," he said to the clerk.

The directions were given, and Victor walked out. When he reached the court-house, which was a massive brick building, he sought for and entered the office of the Clerk of the Court. A man was seated behind a long table, the space that it occupied being cut off from the remainder of the apartment by wooden bars. He was writing.

Victor advanced to the bars, and looked through. The man paused from his work, and gave him a polite salutation.

"Anything I can do for you, sir?" he asked pleasantly.

"You are the Clerk of the Circuit Court?" Victor inquired.

"Yes."

"I merely wish for some information, which I suppose of course you can give," said Victor. "Tell me, if you please, how the suit for a property in this county known as the Cashel estate was decided."

"The suit of Cashel *versus* Cashel," said the clerk, "went in favor of the plaintiff, — a lady, as you are probably aware."

Victor's face flushed a little.

"I am not sorry for that," he said, as if speaking to himself.

"Are you acquainted with the parties to this suit, sir?" asked the clerk.

An expression as near like hatred as could enter them came into the frank eyes of Victor.

"I have met the defendant," he replied.

The clerk did not notice the expression of his eyes, as it chanced.

"As I have said," the clerk pursued, "the plaintiff gained the case in this court; but an appeal was taken. The probability is that the decision will be the same in the Superior Court; but still it may not."

"Are you aware of the present whereabouts of the plaintiff?" Victor asked.

"I am not," answered the clerk. "I think you might find her in Baltimore. At any rate I can give you the address of her attorneys, — Wylie & Oldham, Baltimore."

"I thank you for your information," Mr. Victor said, as he turned away.

Reaching the office door, he met a man coming in. It was Evans. He glanced at Victor, scrutinizing him somewhat closely.

"Who was that, Douglass?" he asked of the clerk.

"I do not know," was the answer.

"What did he want?" Evans continued.

Evans was rarely so curious about strangers; but something seemed to prompt him to ask questions about Victor.

"He was merely making some inquiries about the Cashel suit," said Douglass.

"What did he say about that?"

The clerk hesitated, for he did not like Evans, and had no desire to utter a sentence that would benefit him any; but he concluded that nothing could be made out of the words of the stranger that would advantage Evans.

"He appeared to rejoice at the way the suit was decided," Douglass said.

"It appears to me, that, whoever he may be," cried Evans angrily, "he is meddling with other people's affairs."

Then the lawyer added meaningly, —

"He may have cause for sorrow yet, Douglass. The end of this matter is not reached, you know. It will be very singular if an estate like Cashel's can be wrested from its rightful owner with impunity."

It was seldom that Evans talked so much to Douglass, for he was conscious in his evil heart that the clerk did not like him; but the stranger's interest in the Cashel suit had angered him, and for the moment he had half forgotten all this.

He attended to the business that had brought him to the office,—the looking-over of some musty documents,—and left the court-house.

Victor returned to his hotel.

"My curiosity is satisfied," he said to himself, as he walked along. "It is best, I suppose, that the case went as it did. This is but the beginning. There are clouds gathering over that villain's head of which he does not dream; and in good time they will overwhelm him too. At present, I am satisfied to watch this case. I must behold her to assure myself that she is a Cashel. I believe I can tell the true metal."

"At what time is the next train for Baltimore due?" Victor asked the clerk, when he reached the hotel again.

"Not till half-past seven o'clock," was the reply.

It was some time to wait; but the hours passed, and Victor found himself moving toward Baltimore once more.

On the morning of the next day Victor entered Mr. Wylie's office. He proposed to pursue his inquiries about the new claimant to the Cashel estate a little farther. Doubtless Mr. Wylie or Mr. Oldham would inform him where Miss Cashel could be found, and he would make it convenient to call upon her.

Some day his interest would be explained.

Mr. Wylie was in, but Victor found it somewhat difficult to state what he wished. Talking to Mr. Wylie was not like questioning an officer of the court, who would be expected to answer all business inquiries freely.

"My name is Victor," he managed to say at length; "and, understanding that you are the attorney for the plaintiff in the suit of Cashel *versus* Cashel, I have come to you to inquire if you will be kind enough to inform me where I can find her."

Mr. Wylie glanced at the speaker's face. There was nothing there to give him fright for his client: on the contrary, the face before him wore an expression frank and pleasant, and was evidently the face of an honest and noble man.

"Miss Cashel is with some friends in the

country," Mr. Wylie said; "but she is known by another name. It is her request that I keep her identity as much of a secret as possible till this case is settled. If I should direct you where to find her, her secret would be betrayed. But, Mr. Victor, I am her attorney; and if you have anything of importance to communicate, I will listen to it gladly. Of course, under the circumstances, I am forced to conclude that you have some object of importance in view in wishing to see Miss Cashel."

Victor realized at that moment that his position might be misunderstood. It had not entered his mind before that Mr. Wylie might be suspicious of him. He had an object in view in wishing to see Miss Cashel; but he did not desire to state it at that time.

"I have nothing to communicate at present," he returned to Mr. Wylie. "Of course I cannot expect you to do otherwise than obey her request."

Then he added, after a moment's pause,—

"I am aware, Mr. Wylie, that it seems ridiculous that I should be searching for Miss Cashel, and yet refuse to state why I wish to behold her. You will pardon me for my absurdity. The truth is, I have heretofore only thought of my desire to look upon her, and have not considered my errand here in its ridiculous light."

"Are you acquainted with Mr. Lionel Cashel, the defendant in this case?" Mr. Wylie inquired.

Again the same expression came into Victor's eyes that had entered them when Douglass, the clerk, had asked him a similar question.

"I know him," he said coldly.

The keen lawyer did not fail to see the gleam in the man's eyes, and he felt doubly assured that his client had nothing to fear from him.

"He likes not Cashel, and so conversely, for that reason, if no other, is a friend to us," was Mr. Wylie's thought.

"When will the case be tried again?" inquired Victor.

"In December," was the answer.

"At Richmond?"

"At Richmond."

"I intended to be present at the first trial," Victor continued; "but I was kept away by business affairs. Good-day, Mr. Wylie."

And Victor bowed himself out of the lawyer's office.

"That man appears to take a strange interest in this case," muttered Mr. Wylie. "It cannot be a mere blind hatred of Cashel that influences him; for, if I am any judge of human nature, he is not the man to cherish anything of that kind. To say the least, his conduct is singular; and there is some mystery hidden under all this."

Frequently, after that, did the lawyer think of Victor, and that interview.

"I have made a fool of myself," mused Victor, as he hastened away from the attorney's office. "Strange that I did not think what a predicament I would be in when Wylie should question me as to my object—as I ought to have considered that he most assuredly would. I am not sorry that I did not discover her whereabouts. How would I have felt calling on a strange young lady, and unable to give a reason for my visit? Truly, I have been decidedly thoughtless."

And thus, for the time, at least, Victor's quest ended.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### AT DE VERE'S AGAIN.

Meantime, Barbara Lindsley had returned to her friends in Virginia.

Victor called at the residence of Mrs. Holland, in Baltimore, and, inquiring for her, was told whither she had gone.

Victor was sorry that he could not see Miss Lindsley immediately; but still he had room for pleasurable feelings, for he had laid his plans to be much in the vicinity of The Cedars for some time at least.

What drew this man thither so frequently? It seemed as though it must be some strange, powerful influence.

To return to Barbara.

There were still some guests at De Vere's when she arrived,—among them, Vincent Sherwood.

A day or two passed, and during those passing days Barbara watched Victoria and Vincent Sherwood. She came to the conclusion that there were pretty strong evidences of a pair of lovers.

"Has Mr. Sherwood proposed yet?" Barbara asked, when she was alone with Victoria once.

Victoria blushed.

"Why, no!" she exclaimed. "What put that idea in your mind, Barbara?"

"Am I blind?" cried Barbara, still in the same light tone. "My dear, the gentleman is certainly bewitched by your loveliness. If he has not proposed yet, he will before long, or I am very much deceived with tokens."

Victoria concluded that she could match Barbara's railery.

"Do you know, Barbara," she said, "that that rich Mr. Cashel has not been here since you left? What does that mean? What am I to infer was the attraction that brought him here?"

A pained expression came into Barbara's face, and Victoria, glancing up, saw it.

"Mr. Cashel has been ill the greater portion of the time," she said; "and of course, for that reason, he could not visit us."

"Yes, very ill," said Barbara musingly.

Victoria only caught the last two words, and took them for a question.

"Mr. Cashel has been very sick, indeed," she said; "nigh unto death."

There was a silence, and then Barbara changed the subject of conversation.

Robert De Vere and Vincent Sherwood came in the parlor, where the girls were.

"Where have you two been hiding?" cried Robert. "Vincent and I have been searching in every direction for both of you."

"We have been here for some time," Victoria replied.

"Not for any great time, sis," Robert returned. "It has not been ten minutes since we looked in here. You were not here then."

"What have you on hand that demands our urgent attention?" Barbara inquired.

"We want you to take a gallop after dinner," Robert replied. "Do you consent?"

"To be sure," said Barbara. "I delight in nothing more than horseback-riding."

Victoria acquiesced, and so the matter was arranged.

The young people still remained in the parlor, and in the course of their conversation Vincent Sherwood referred to the master of The Cedars.

"I hear that his suit has gone against him," said Robert De Vere. "You remember, Miss Lindsley, that we had some conversation about it once."

Barbara murmured some reply, in so low a tone that it was scarcely audible.

"I must confess that I did not expect this result," Robert added.

"And a woman is to own that magnificent estate," cried Vincent Sherwood. "In truth, she will be a queen."

"I intended to witness the suit," Robert said to Barbara. "But circumstances called me to Richmond, and I did not return till after the time it was all over, as I supposed. I had to depart shortly after you did, Miss Lindsley, but I made my return much sooner."

"Cashel has not been here since his convalescence," said Sherwood: "I suppose we can look for him shortly."

"I dare say," Robert replied.

"I suppose I am a little premature in speaking of the queen of the Cashel possessions," Vincent continued. "Cashel would certainly appeal the case. If he has given it up, I suppose he is in no humor to visit his neighbors."

"He has not given it up yet," Robert De Vere said. "I understand he carries it to the Court of Appeals."

Barbara Lindsley had placed herself at the piano.

"Listen!" cried Victoria gayly, interrupting. "Barbara is going to play."

Barbara did play, and Cashel and his suit were forgotten by her hearers, as they listened to the delicious sounds evoked by the music of her touch.

The light talk that followed was unimportant.

After dinner the young men's programme was carried out, and a merry little party galloped away from the De Vere residence. The afternoon was pleasant, for a delicious breeze was blowing.

The young people took a road that stretched toward the Cashel estate, cutting through it half a mile back of the gray stone mansion.

Suddenly, in making an abrupt turn around a little hill, they encountered a man on horseback, galloping swiftly. He brushed close to the girls, but in a moment was past. A long red beard, shaken by the breeze, was about all they had time to distinguish of his features. But Barbara's heart beat more quickly. The brief glance she had of the man reminded her of Victor.

It was Victor. He checked his horse, for he had recognized Barbara, but the party had already vanished around the turn in the road, and she was lost from sight.

Victor was on his way to De Vere's to call on Barbara, and he debated whether or not he should turn back. He decided not to return. If Barbara had not already recognized him, she would when he should overtake or meet her, and she would infer on what errand he had started.

It was not strange that such a simple thing should cause quite a struggle in his mind, for Victor, the brave, noble, great-hearted Victor, knew that he loved this woman.

Who can fathom or explain the impulses of love? Love is diffident! Love stumbles where reason walks erect! Love takes fright at nothing!

But when, an hour later, Barbara returned from her ride, she found Victor waiting for her in the parlor at De Vere's.

Nothing lover-like occurred in the pleasant hour that followed. They were friends! Victor felt that he had no right to presume on aught else.

"As it now is I am sure of her friendship," he thought. "I can not afford to peril that, yet, for the bare possibility of her love. Perhaps some day I may speak, but now I must keep silent, for I am nothing but a wanderer, defrauded out of my name even, as it were."

When Barbara went to her room after Victor's departure, she found Victoria there. Twilight was gathering, and the young girl sat in the shadows.

Barbara knelt by her side.

"Pet," she murmured softly, drawing Victoria's head toward her.

To her surprise, a damp face touched hers.

"What! my darling is weeping," Barbara cried.

A faint sob was the answer.

"Victoria, what ails you?" asked Barbara kindly.

"Dear Barbara, I am very happy," murmured Victoria with another sob.

"Wherefore, pet?"

Victoria was silent.

"Tell me, Victoria?"

"He — he — loves" — Victoria commenced hesitatingly.

"Go on, darling."

"He loves me?"

"Mr. Sherwood?"

"Yes."

"He has told you so?"

"Yes."



"And, darling Victoria, you love him?"

"With all my heart!" Victoria spoke more freely now that her secret was out. "He asked me to be his wife, and I have promised."

Barbara rose to her feet, and took the fair golden head in her arms. She bent over Victoria, and kissed her tenderly.

"Heaven bless you, sweet!" Barbara whispered.

The twilight thickened into darkness. The two girls sat still, the heart of one running over with happiness, the other happy for her friend's sake, yet with a touch of pain at her heart in wondering what the future would bring forth for her.



## THE BATTLE FOR THE CEDARS.—A STORY OF LOVE AND LAW. \*

BY PRESLEY W. MORRIS.

[NO. 4.—COMPLETE IN FOUR NUMBERS.]

### CHAPTER XXI.

#### BETWEEN WALLS.

Already had Henri Valasquez decided upon the manner of disposing of his victim. In fact, he had arranged that before entering the crimson room.

He unfastened the door of the apartment, and returning to the side of Lionel Cashel, lifted him in his arms. But after taking a step or two he placed him down again.

"Curse it!" muttered Valasquez, "I had nearly forgotten his clothing. I shall not leave that behind to betray me."

He seized Lionel's clothing, and bound it to the helpless form, and then, raising the powerless man in his arms once more, carried him from the crimson room.

The burden of Valasquez was a heavy one, but excitement gave him strength, and he bore it easily enough. He had no light, but knew the course that he wished to pursue, and felt that he could find his way whither he wished.

At length the halls echoed hollowly to his tread. He was far in the west wing of the great mansion. He ascended a stairway, and at the top was compelled to stop, breathless with fatigue.

"This is not so much of a farce to you, Mr. Lionel Cashel," he muttered, "as was the performance of a few nights ago."

He continued on again. But presently he stopped, and placed Lionel Cashel on the floor.

For a moment he groped about, then his hand came in contact with a large key in a door. He turned it, and the door swung open, creaking on its hinges.

A lamp placed on the floor lighted a bare, unfurnished apartment. Valasquez lifted it, and looked around. The room must certainly have been constructed for a prison. There was no other opening to it than the

door by which Valasquez had entered, not even a grating in the walls. They seemed as solid and firm as adamant.

Valasquez chuckled wickedly. He placed the lamp upon the floor again, and, seizing Lionel, dragged him into the apartment. Again he lifted the lamp, and stood looking down upon the pale, handsome face of his victim.

"I believe he is dead already," Valasquez muttered, with a laugh of devilish malignity and triumph.

He went out of the prison, shutting the heavy door behind him. It closed with a dull clang. Valasquez locked it, and put the rusty key in his pocket. The rays of the lamp fell on the wall. The door seemed almost as solid as iron. It was set far in the stone walls which jutted out beyond it, a foot on each side.

Had the builder of that prison intended it for any such purpose as this?

"Lionel Cashel, I swear that door shall never be opened on you more," muttered Valasquez, as he walked slowly away. "You will never trouble me more."

Suddenly he turned and went back to the door of the prison. He stood by it, and for a moment the intense, baleful glare of his eye was as bright as the light of the lamp.

"Yes, I will have it done!" he said aloud in a tone low and hoarse. "Solid walls of stone shall shut him in. Ha! ha! fools should beware how they trifle with Henri Valasquez. Henri Valasquez! No! By heaven! I think I am entitled to that other name by this time!"

A few minutes later he was in the crimson room again.

"There is nothing to excite suspicion here," he muttered, after he had closed the secret entrance, and taken a survey of the apartment.

He returned to the library. Extinguish-

[\*Entered according to Act of Congress, by THOMES & TALBOT, Boston, Mass., in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington.]

ing the lights there, he retired to his sleeping-room.

He slept till the sun was far up in the heavens. Valasquez had no conscience, so that no pangs for crime committed could disturb his slumbers.

Arising, and going to the library, he was summoned to breakfast immediately.

"Sant," he said carelessly to his servant, "you can go to the crimson room, and see if that strange gentleman is ready for breakfast."

"He am gone, Massa Cashel," said Sant. "I was up to his room an hour ago, and he was n't dar."

"Humph!" said Valasquez, "he takes an unceremonious leave, not even returning thanks for his lodging."

"I suppose, Massa Cashel, he am just some straggler," Sant said. "'Pears kind ob strange, though, dat he would n't wait fer his breakfas'?"

"Yes," muttered Valasquez.

To Sant, as Valasquez had supposed it would be, there was nothing mysterious in the disappearance of the stranger. That the man should rise early and depart was nothing very very peculiar, — and of course that was the most natural way of accounting for his absence.

"Sant, is there a brick-mason about the place?" the false master of The Cedars asked, as Sant waited on him at breakfast.

"'Spect ole yaller Varcor is de man," Sant answered. "He knows how to work in brick, and stone and mortar."

"Send him to the library after breakfast," ordered Valasquez.

"Yes, sah."

Half an hour later, "ole yaller Varcor" shuffled into the library. He was not as aged as might be inferred from Sant's words, probably not much beyond forty years of age. He was stout in build, and his face was a wicked one. He looked as though he might have inherited the evil traits of both the races from which he was evidently descended. But Varcor had never had any opportunity to distinguish himself in the line for which his face showed forth tokens of such eminent qualifications, — that of cunning villainy, — for he had been a slave all his life.

"Sant tells me that you are a mason," said Valasquez to him.

"Yes, sah, I is," Varcor returned.

"I want you to prepare some brick and

mortar to close a hole up-stairs. Afterward, you can plaster it over."

"Yes, Massa Cashel."

"That is all, for the present. You can go now and prepare. When you are ready, let me know."

"Yes, sah."

While the slave was gone on his errand, Valasquez crept up to the room where he had placed Lionel Cashel. He bent his ear to the door, but no sound came to him. He pounded it with his fists, but only hollow echoes rang out.

Then he stood in silence for many minutes.

Not a sound, but his own breathing, broke the stillness.

Valasquez had sworn that the door should never open upon Lionel Cashel. He, assassin, villain of the deepest dye, meant to keep his word in this respect! Yet he would not have hesitated at a thousand false oaths to further his ends!

It was simply a deep, diabolical sense of triumph in keeping his vow, that restrained him from opening the door and looking in.

When he returned to the library he had no great time to wait till Varcor came back.

"De brick and de mortar am ready," said the slave. "De mortar I finds already mixed."

"Load yourself with brick, and I will show you where to take them," said Valasquez.

Strong physically as Varcor was, he was panting under his burden when he and Valasquez reached the fatal doorway.

"I have taken a notion to have this place closed," said the false master of The Cedars, pointing to the door set in stone. "Bring your mortar and the rest of your brick."

It was but the slave's place to obey unquestioningly. His cruel face displayed no signs of suspicion. Probably he had none. If the false master of The Cedars had felt that he was suspicious of some iniquitous transaction, he would have given himself no uneasiness, for in the first place he knew that the quality of mercy was lacking in the mulatto's breast, and he would not trouble himself to inquire into any wrong; and, further, his slaves knew better than to talk about him.

Valasquez stood by until the last brick was laid and the wall plastered over.

Not a single sound to betray that the

prison had a human occupant had been heard.

"Its mystery will never be revealed," was the exulting thought of the demon, whose base soul had conceived the plan.

Ay, it was a dark secret that the prison-  
room held. Who would ever dream of it?

What suspicion could fall upon the rich master of The Cedars?

## CHAPTER XXII.

### A NOTE OF RETRIBUTION.

It was only the next day that Henri Valasquez was riding toward the De Vere residence with the intention of calling upon Barbara Lindsley. As has been stated, he had no conscience, so that no guilty pangs could serve to restrain him from any plan that he wished to complete.

Galloping along, he met a colored boy, riding horseback also. Valasquez was about to pass, when the boy called to him.

"Massa Cashel, here am sumpfin fer you," he said.

The man reined in his horse, and the boy gave him a white envelope. It bore these words:—

MR. LIONEL CASHEL,  
THE CEDARS,  
VIRGINIA.

The false master of The Cedars opened the dainty affair, and comprehended immediately what was inclosed. It was the wedding card of Victoria De Vere and Vincent Sherwood.

"October 4, at five o'clock P. M.," said Valasquez to himself. "Only a few days off. Somewhat sudden, upon my word! It will be necessary for me to return home, I suppose, and write my acknowledgments of their favor, for this messenger."

Valasquez turned back toward The Cedars, bidding the colored boy follow him. Once there it took him but a short time to write a reply to the invitation he had received. This he gave to the messenger, and let him depart.

"I believe I will defer my visit till this evening," was the conclusion at which Valasquez arrived. "It will answer my purpose to go then as well as to go now."

As usual, Valasquez ate his dinner in solitude. He partook but slightly, however, for he had no appetite. His deep, strong

passion for Barbara Lindsley was working upon him. Perhaps it was not strange that such men as he can love with powerful, passionate impulse, with a love that can be satisfied only by making a slave of its object.

Valasquez had decided to ask Barbara once more to be his wife. The hope that hung on this question took away his appetite, unnerved him, and made him tremble.

It was three o'clock when he finished his dinner. Rising from the table, he ordered Sant to have his horse brought out again.

Reaching De Vere's, his ring brought a servant to the door.

"Tell Miss Lindsley that a gentleman wishes to see her," he said.

His message reached Barbara exactly as he had sent it, and her thoughts at once flew to Victor. She came down-stairs with pleasurable anticipations at her heart.

At the parlor door she beheld who was waiting for her, and she paused for a moment, while a chill of disappointment fell upon her. It was not Victor, not her hero, but the man, whom, of all the world, she dreaded most. She entered the parlor, and bowed coldly. There was a brief pause, and then a few remarks that interested neither. Then Valasquez unceremoniously plunged headlong into that for which he had come.

"Miss Lindsley," he cried, "I am here to tell you again that I love you! I love you so madly that I must speak."

The girl grew pale, but uttered not a word.

"Miss Lindsley," the false master of The Cedars continued, "will you be my wife? I entreat you, by my love, to answer that question differently from what you did before!"

Barbara turned away her face.

"Speak," cried Valasquez.

"I answered you once," spoke the girl at last, in a low, firm tone.

"But, Miss Lindsley, is your answer the same?"

"Yes."

"Is this final?"

"Yes."

"Miss Lindsley, bethink yourself," expostulates Valasquez. "I am the wealthiest man in the country, and, as you are aware, there is now no doubt but that I will continue to be so."

Barbara sprang to her feet, losing her fears in her anger.

"When I wed, if ever I do," she cried, "I will marry a man that I love, and not an estate."

And with a haughty bow she left Valasquez alone.

So much for the estimate he had placed upon Barbara Lindsley's character. His grand argument had fallen dead, having the opposite effect to what he had anticipated.

Valasquez rushed from the house.

"Curse her! curse her! curse her!" was the angry cry of his raging soul, as he mounted and rode away.

"She shall never marry any other man! If she loves any other I shall slay him. And if my love turns to hate, let her beware!"

When he reached The Cedars, he sped swiftly past.

"I believe I should suffocate now, without motion to give me breath," he ejaculated, as he continued on.

And truly the soul of Valasquez was in a whirl of disappointment, rage, and jealousy. Yet of whom should he be jealous? Only of a shadow, as yet.

"She must love somebody," was his thought. "If she does, woe to him!"

It was after dark when he returned to The Cedars, and entered the library.

As he sat with the firelight gleaming out upon him, he kept muttering over those words, —

"Curse her! curse her! curse her! If my love turns to hate, let her beware!"

At last a wild plan took shape in his brain. He clasped his hands till his own grip pained him.

"It is possible," he ejaculated wildly; "yes, possible. I should never be suspected. She shall be mine yet."

"Signor," said a voice, "could you give a poor woman lodging?"

Valasquez started, and turned toward the door. It had opened softly, and a woman was standing there. She was tall, having her face muffled. She advanced a step, and closed the door.

"Ha, ha! Signor Valasquez, you need not answer my query," she exclaimed. "It was meant but for a jest, nothing more."

The man sprang to his feet in astonishment at hearing his own name spoken. But he became calm instantly.

"Woman, you are strangely mistaken," he said coldly. "My name is not Valasquez, but Cashel."

"You lie!" cried the creature passionately.

Valasquez moved toward her, anger swelling in his heart. But instantly the gleaming barrel of a pistol looked him in the face.

"Back, or die in your tracks," hissed the woman. "I would as quickly slay you as I would kill a serpent!"

Valasquez drew back. The woman let the cloak that muffled her face fall away.

"Signora Foscari!" burst involuntarily from the lips of Valasquez.

"You know me now, monster, I see," said the signora. "You have not forgotten Eloisa, nor Eloisa's mother."

"Well, what do you want?" he cried harshly.

"What do I want! I have come, Henri Valasquez, to let you know that the avenger is on your track. Ha, ha! my vengeance will be as sweet as your doom is terrible."

Valasquez paled, and sank into a seat, trembling.

"Woman, I tell you again that you are mistaken in my identity," he said.

"And I say again, Henri Valasquez, that you lie! You have condemned yourself. How knew you my name? But I needed not that to convince me, though you call yourself Lionel Cashel, the wealthy gentleman of this great property. You could never deceive my heart, the heart of Eloisa's mother. It has been a weary search I have had, but I have found you at last, and I know you.

"Ay, monster, it has been a weary search, but had it taken a score of years, had it taken my lifetime, I would never have ceased, and you unfound. And had I died, and Eloisa unavenged, my soul would have sought out yours in the spirit-world, and blasted it with its hate!

"I might slay you now," the woman continued, after a moment's silence, "but I have not come for that. Instead, I have come to tell you that you are doomed; that a more hideous fate than any of which you can dream is to be yours. I might expose you to the world, but, bah! that would be no punishment compared with the end prepared for you. O Henri Valasquez, villain, assassin, demon, betrayer of innocence, your doom is fixed! I swear by all the wrongs of my dead child that you shall die a death terrible as my hatred of you is deep and strong and eternal!"

The woman opened the door of the library, and slowly stepped back till she disappeared.

The last thing that Henri Valasquez beheld was the gleam of the pistol barrel.

"I must conquer her," was his thought. "I shall have to slay her, or she will destroy me. Fate has favored me thus far, and will permit me to outwit her. She must die!"

But many times during the night he awoke with a shudder from dreams in which a woman with wild, fierce face bent over him, announcing a dreadful doom, from which there was no way of escape.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### OUT OF THE SNARE.

Lionel Cashel became conscious of a dull sensation of pain, and then he tried to struggle loose from some power that held him in its bonds. Was he dreaming, or was this fearful oppression real?

Slowly a sense of his position came to him. He was not dreaming. He realized that he was awake, and bound and gagged. All about him was thick darkness.

"Where am I?" was his mental ejaculation.

Then he remembered his interview with Valasquez; how he had retired to the crinson room; his feeling of security; he had slept.

After that all was blank.

But Lionel knew that he was once more in the power of his foe. At that thought he struggled fiercely in his bonds, and tried to free himself.

His efforts were all in vain.

He wearied himself, and was forced to lie still in despair, not knowing for what fate he was reserved. Death in some measure seemed certain, for he felt that he was as helpless as a new-born babe, and Valasquez would never let him escape alive, he knew.

How long he had lain there thinking, when there came a loud noise close at hand that echoed through the apartment, he could form scarcely an idea. At the sound he instinctively tried to cry out, but no utterance could he give forth. That he could not shriek seemed maddening; for he knew not but that the person making those sounds might rescue him.

The echoes died away to quietness,—a quiet as profound as that of the grave.

What appeared to Lionel a long period of time passed.

In reality, it was the space between the departure of Valasquez from the door, and his return with the slave, Varcor. Then Lionel heard the noises made in laying the brick to wall up the doorway. At first he did not comprehend, but presently his horrified brain took in the fact that he was being shut in between walls. Occasionally he heard a suppressed voice that he knew belonged to Valasquez.

Once more Lionel struggled to free himself,—struggled fiercely till the cords with which he was bound cut into his limbs. But he did not release himself, and he stopped at last.

He was not aware of it, in his numbed condition, but his powerful struggles had partially unloosed the cords that held him, so that his next fierce effort would in all probability give him the use of his limbs.

The work outside went on. It was completed. Lionel heard his enemies depart, and once more silence reigned.

Despair overwhelmed Lionel Cashel. A thousand lights seemed to flash before his eyes. Thrills of agony shot through his frame.

"Am I dying?" he thought wildly.

He gave one last mad effort, and—his hands were freed from the bonds that held them. He felt that he had a new lease of life. He sat up, and tore the gag from his mouth.

"Thank heaven!" he cried.

Then he unbound his feet, and rose upright. He was so stiff and sore that he could not remain standing at first. But presently he was able to grope his way about the apartment. Lionel thought it must be past morning, long past, but not a single ray of light entered the room. All was darkness.

Lionel reached the solid walls, and felt about them. What availed it!

He had released himself from a painful position of body; but, farther than that, what availed his freedom from bonds? Was he any nearer to actual liberty? He could not feel that he was.

"I am shut out from light and life and hope," he cried agonizingly. "Oh the devilish malignity of that villain!"

What could his prison be but a living

tomb? He was to die a slow, torturing death between these walls, according to the purpose of Valasquez.

He shouted loudly for help; but the sounds only came back to him, mockings of despair. Long Lionel continued to grope about, but at length he sank upon the floor, hungry, fatigued, and utterly despairing.

Sleep overcame him, and for some hours he lay locked in its embrace. He awoke to remember his groping about the walls.

"Would he continue that, only to drop down exhausted at last, and die?" he asked himself.

Probably his action was instinctive, like that of the prisoned bird that flutters its wings against the bars of its cage. Perhaps he had given over all hopes of escape; but, for all that, he could not lie down calmly and perish!

But Lionel Cashel was not to die in this manner.

At last a secret that the false master of the Cedars had never discovered, of which he had no idea, was made apparent. Lionel's blind gropings were not in vain! Suddenly there was a harsh grating sound, and he felt the rush of fresh air.

He had troubled a spring, and had caused a square in the seemingly solid wall to swing away. After that it was but the work of an instant to find the aperture.

He found the opening abundantly large for him to crawl through. He raised himself slowly to it, and in another moment was out of the prison room.

Lionel looked about. A short distance away, he saw outlined a faint square of light. He made his way to it, and found it to be, as he had supposed, a window. It looked out upon the grounds behind the stone mansion.

Lionel returned to the secret door. He closed it, and that which had been intended for his tomb was sealed again. He cautiously removed the sash of the window. Just to one side of it were the clambering branches of a huge grape-vine. It took Lionel but a few seconds to lower himself to the earth.

It was night, and it had been twenty-four hours, fully, since he had been carried from the crimson room by his foe.

All was quiet. The stars sparkled in the heavens. The great mansion stood outlined against the sky. Not even a breeze rustled

the foliage of the trees. How fearfully calm the scene was!

"Heaven cannot always smile on that villain," thought Lionel. "His day of doom will come some time."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### VICTORIA'S BRIDAL.

It was the wedding eve of Victoria De Vere and Vincent Sherwood. The De Vere mansion was brilliantly lighted, and it was a gay scene on which the lamps shone. There was quite a crowd of people, some of them from the neighborhood, but most of them invited from Baltimore. The false master of The Cedars was in attendance. It was part of a plot that he should be there. Otherwise his anger at Barbara Lindsley would have kept him away.

The solemn ceremony that made the twain one flesh had occurred at the appointed hour.

The guests presently repaired to the dining-room, where a sumptuous repast was awaiting them of which they proceeded to partake. It was nearly finished when Valasquez, glancing down the long table, beheld a face that startled him some.

"I am a fool still," he thought. "I saw that man once before, and let his resemblance to him frighten me!"

But after supper Valasquez sought out Robert De Vere.

"You have a guest here whose name I wish to know," he said.

"Well?" Robert returned.

"He is a tall man, and has a long red beard. Do you remember him?"

"Yes: his name is Victor."

"From where?" continued Valasquez.

"Oh! there he is now."

"The same," said Robert. "He is from Baltimore, I believe, Mr. Cashel. To tell the truth, I know very little about him. He is a friend of Miss Lindsley. Shall I introduce you?"

"It is not necessary," replied Valasquez.

A few feet away, Victor turned to one side. To all appearances he had not seen the false master of The Cedars.

Victor continued on through the parlors, making his way slowly through the gay and fluttering assembly. Evidently, he was searching for some one. It was Barbara Lindsley; and he discovered her presently, unattended.

"Miss Lindsley," he said, "will you promenade with me on the piazza?"

"Certainly," Barbara replied.

"I will not promise to remain out here long. Mr. Victor," she said gayly, when they reached the piazza.

For a full minute Victor did not speak, Barbara keeping silent too. Of what was this silence the augury?

Suddenly Victor laid his hand upon the one resting so lightly upon his arm.

"Miss Lindsley, I was not without an object in wishing you to come out here," he said, while his voice trembled a little; "an object of the very greatest importance to me."

The girl's heart throbbed with delight. That beginning could lead in but one direction.

"Miss Lindsley, you know but very little about me," Victor continued. "Perhaps you consider me as merely an adventurer. Still" —

"No, not that, Mr. Victor," Barbara said; "Please do not speak so."

"I am under a cloud at present," proceeded Victor, feeling that he was making a stammering effort; "but I hope and believe it will clear away ere long."

If a man's success in love affairs depended on the clearness with which he could express himself, how ill the best men would fare! Victor paused, seemingly at a loss how to continue.

"Go on," whispered Barbara softly.

What a blessed aid were those two little words!

"O Miss Lindsley!" Victor said passionately. "I love you with all my heart. I do not ask you now to say that you love me; but, if you feel that there is a possibility of your ever doing so, please tell me that I may hope."

"Mr. Victor, you may hope," said Barbara.

The two stood there, uttering no other word.

Victor felt the hand that he held in his tremble a little. And that clasping of hands was enough for them then.

"Let us go in," whispered Barbara presently. "We shall be missed."

So they went in, a new-found happiness in each heart. Victor could not appropriate Barbara, and he was content to let her mingle with the other guests.

A few hours sped. Barbara wondered if

the master of The Cedars was watching her; for it appeared to her that she could not get out of his view. Yet he did not approach near enough at any time to converse with her.

At length, feeling that his very gaze was hateful, and anxious to get out of his sight, if only for a few moments, and wishing also to be alone with her happiness for a short time, Barbara sought the conservatory, which was near. A colored lamp cast a dim light around. Barbara found the place deserted, and she seated herself on a rustic bench, while the spicy fragrance of the flowers refreshed her senses.

Scarcely, however, had she taken her seat, when she heard a step, and the false master of The Cedars entered.

"Fairiest of the flowers, Miss Lindsley," he cried.

"Mr. Cashel, compliments are unnecessary at present," said Barbara, as she rose to go.

"Stay, Miss Lindsley," the man said, in a low, smooth tone: "I wish a word with you. I beg your pardon for what I said that was offensive the other day. If you will promise to say nothing about my proposal, I will give you my word to trouble you no more on that subject."

"Your request is a strange one," the girl said freezingly. "However, I will state, for your satisfaction, that I have not mentioned the matter to any one; nor do I expect to."

In view of a wicked plan that he had devised, those were the very words that the villain wished to draw from the girl. He had realized that he should scarcely dare put his plan in execution if she had mentioned to any one his proposal and her refusal. But she had acted in that matter as he had hoped and believed she would, and he felt that he could proceed without any danger of suspicion falling upon him.

Barbara turned away. As she did so, Valasquez sprang forward, and, seizing her, placed his hand over her mouth. She tried to scream, but could not; for that cruel pressure kept her silent.

"Silence, or you shall die!" hissed the villain in her ear.

Barbara sank cold and white in his arms.

She had fainted with fright. He tied a handkerchief about her mouth, and with another bound her hands. Then he lifted her, and carried her out into the night.



There was no moon, and clouds were sailing across the heavens. It seemed as though nature, even, was favoring the dark plans of the villain.

Valasquez was in the rear of the De Vere residence, and evidently there was nothing to hinder him from carrying away Barbara Lindsley. He hastened rapidly along. Shortly he darted away from the house into the shadow of some trees. He paused beneath one with low branches. The mournful cry of the whip-poor-will sang out upon the night air.

The sound was a signal. It was answered, repeated, and answered again. Then a crouching figure crept up to Valasquez.

"Varcor," he said in a cautious whisper.

"Massa Cashel," was the equally cautious reply.

"Here she is, Varcor. Be careful."

And Varcor, the slave, received Barbara Lindsley in his arms.

In a few minutes, Valasquez was back in the brilliantly lighted parlors. He entered from the piazza. His absence had not been noticed by any one.

"I scarcely dared hope for such success," was his triumphant thought as he mingled in the gay scene. "I feared fate would give me no opportunity to accomplish my purpose; but I could have wished for no better luck. If I had had the arranging of it all beforehand, I could not have managed matters better."

The bride and groom were, according to arrangement, to depart for Baltimore on a train at a little past midnight, most of the guests accompanying them. It was not till preparations began to be made for this departure, that the absence of Barbara Lindsley was discovered.

At first no great alarm was felt, for it was thought that she would yet appear in time.

But she had utterly disappeared, and no trace could be found of her about the residence or grounds.

"What can have become of her?" was the question that was asked frequently, but remained unanswered.

The Baltimore guests could not remain, and took the train at the appointed hour, pale with alarm at the startling and tragical termination of the evening's gayeties. Of course, Victoria and her husband did not now dream of leaving.

Valasquez played his part well. He seemed anxious and excited about Barbara,

but still he did not carry his acting far enough to cause suspicion that it was false.

"The last I beheld of her," he remarked to Robert De Vere, seemingly incidentally, "was to see her go out on the piazza with that stranger whose name is Victor, as you informed me this evening."

"With whom?" cried Robert.

"With that tall, red-whiskered fellow who you said was from Baltimore. I have not noticed either one of them since."

"By heaven! Cashel," cried Robert excitedly. "I have not beheld him for some time, either. If he has wrought any harm to her he shall rue it."

"But I can scarcely lay her disappearance at his door," Robert added. "He seemed too frank and noble to be guilty of such a crime."

But Victor had disappeared, too, as well as Barbara, and his absence was not in his favor at that time.

The hours of the night wore away, and still there was no sign of Barbara Lindsley.

What could be done? Literally, nothing.

Poor Victoria's bridal eve was clouded by the darkness of this mystery. She, poor girl, wept long and violently on her young husband's breast. What dreadful secret might be hidden under Barbara's disappearance! Perhaps, O dreadful thought! she had been murdered, and was lying somewhere under the black night, cold, and stained with blood.

But Victoria's paroxysm of fright and grief passed away after a while, and she became calm enough, but was pale and troubled.

The fact that no idea could be formed as to what had become of Barbara, rendered her disappearance the more harassing to her friends. The very mystery of her fate would cause the imagination to conjure up possibilities the most torturing.

Morning dawned. Henri Valasquez went to The Cedars.

What could be done? Must Barbara's friends sit calmly down and await a development?

Would the mystery ever be explained? The girl might as well have been carried to an invisible world by some strange power, for all the conjecture that could be made of her whereabouts.

"I shall go to Fairmount and notify the sheriff of Barbara's disappearance," Robert answered. "Perhaps the officers of the law

may be able to aid us in our search for her."

And, after partaking of a hasty breakfast, he mounted a horse, and rode rapidly away toward Fairmount. Reaching the town, he performed the duty he had imposed upon himself, and then sought out the Mountain City House, the best hotel in the place.

"Has a young man by the name of Victor been stopping here lately?" he asked of the clerk.

"He has," was the answer.

"Where is he now?"

"He went to Baltimore this morning, on the 3.30 express."

This seemed to Robert De Vere a confirmation of the vague suspicion he had before entertained. He had been mistaken in Victor, he feared. After all, he was a villain, and to him could be traced the cause of Barbara's disappearance.

"What could be his object?" was the query that suggested itself to Robert.

Several possibilities suggested themselves. The most plausible idea was that Victor had been Barbara's suitor, and had been refused. Then,—ah! if his suspicions were correct, this then was easily followed to a conclusion.

"I will follow him to Baltimore," was Robert's hasty thought. "I will pursue him, and if he or any of his tools have abducted or otherwise harmed her, let them beware!"

As these thoughts passed through his mind, Robert had been standing in the office of the hotel.

"When is there another train for Baltimore?" he now asked of the clerk.

"At eighteen minutes past ten,—about an hour hence," was the reply.

Robert wrote a note explaining his continued absence, and gave it to the sheriff, whom he found upon the eve of departing with a *posse* for the scene of the mystery. Of course, Robert had no intention of detaining him from proceeding. All means possible must be used for the discovery of Barbara.

The train thundered along at the appointed moment, and soon Robert was going as rapidly toward Baltimore as steam and iron could bear him.

Mr. Victor had gone to Baltimore, as the clerk had stated; but when Robert De Vere had nearly reached the city a train

passed speeding westward swiftly. Victor was on that train. He was accompanied by a couple of experienced detectives.

But he knew naught of the disappearance of Barbara Lindsley.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### HELD CAPTIVE.

The motion of a carriage, and the cool night air blowing upon her, brought Barbara Lindsley to consciousness. She opened her eyes to find herself bound hand and foot, with a bandage tied over her mouth. At first she thought she was in total darkness, but she soon perceived an opening ahead, and, outlined in that, the head and shoulders of a man. A great and terrible dread filled her soul, but she could only lie still and await the end.

At length the carriage stopped. The driver jumped down and fastened his horse to a tree. Then he went to the side of the carriage, and, raising the curtains, lifted Barbara out. He hurried away with her in his arms, while no sound save his tread broke the stillness of the night.

Directly, Barbara saw, standing out against the sky, a tall building, and she comprehended that it was the stone mansion which was justly her inheritance.

The man continued on till he stood directly beneath the shadow of the building with his burden. It was at the extreme end of the east wing, another unoccupied portion of the great mansion, and there was no probability that any person would trouble him. He ascended some stone steps, and pushed against a door that opened at his touch. He entered and groped through a hall and up a stairway. After that, he proceeded some distance along another hall. He stopped before a door that he could feel but not see, and laid his burden down upon the floor. He reached his hand in his pocket, and drew out a heavy, rusty iron key. By his sense of touch he inserted this in a lock and turned it.

A door sprang open, and a lighted apartment was displayed to view. Into this Barbara Lindsley was carried. The door was closed, and then she was unbound and the gag taken from her mouth.

"Oh, spare me!" she cried to the man. "Release me from this prison!"

But the cruel face of Varcor, the slave,

for it was he, showed no pity. Without a word he turned away from the pleading girl. He went out of the door, and shutting it again, locked it. The shooting of the bolt was like the knell of despair to Barbara.

The room in which she was shut was to all appearances very similar to the one in which Lionel Cashel had been thrown, in its strength and prison-like appearance. The loudest cries of a human being would only echo back from its walls. But it was comfortably furnished. It was in the east and not in the west wing of the building, and Valasquez had had it prepared for the use to which it was now being put.

Barbara threw herself on a couch, trembling and in tears. Oh! for what terrible fate was she reserved?

She laid for a long time weeping, but presently she sank into a restless, disturbed slumber. She was awakened by the opening of the door of the apartment.

"Where am I?" she murmured, not remembering her situation at first.

Then she beheld the cruel face of Henri Valasquez.

She sprang to her feet in a moment.

"It is morning," he said, "and I have come to tell you why I brought you hither."

Barbara clasped her hands across her bosom and was silent.

"You have chosen to scorn my suit," Valasquez continued, "but I have taken means to show you that I am not to be trifled with."

He paused to note the effect of his words. Barbara Lindsley was still silent.

"You have scorned my love," Valasquez repeated, "but you are in my power, and shall be my wife yet. You shall never leave this apartment till you solemnly swear to wed me, and that you will not betray me."

Barbara Lindsley found her speech at last.

"I will die ere I will be your wife," she cried, her eyes flashing in scorn. "Yes, villain, I would rot in a cell before I would wed you."

"Beware!" hissed Valasquez. "Beware, girl, or my love for you will turn to hate. You will never escape from here, I repeat, and you may live to repent your utterances."

He colored a little, and added, —

"Consider well, Barbara Lindsley, what

I have said. I mean in all honor that when you are willing you shall be my bride. For the present, the slave who brought you here will attend to your wants, bringing you food every night to last you twenty-four hours. I hope that you will soon relent. I shall come to you occasionally, and ask you for your answer. But I assure you my patience will not endure forever."

He went out, taking care to secure the door.

"Yes, I would die a thousand times over ere I would be his wife!" sobbed Barbara.

She found food and drink that had already been placed on a table for her. After a while she partook, — sparingly, however. She was not hungry, but she wished to reserve her strength, for she could not yet utterly despair of escaping from her prison, and her escaping might depend upon her own efforts.

The hours dragged themselves slowly away.

Late in the afternoon Valasquez came once more into the prison-room. He was seemingly in a softer mood than in the morning.

"Dear Barbara!" he cried, "I would not be so cruel, only I love you so."

The girl felt that she would prefer his anger to his declarations of love.

"Remember how strong, how great my passion for you is," Valasquez continued, "and be kind to me."

He had been drinking more wine even than usual; so much that it had affected his brain, and he was partially intoxicated.

Barbara saw that he was under the influence of wine, and her heart beat rapidly in fear.

"Leave me, Mr. Cashel," she cried. "Give me time to consider."

Her words had the effect that she so much desired.

"Ah, ha! you are relenting," he exclaimed. "I am glad to see it. Well, I will leave you for the present, hoping that by the time I come again, my dear Barbara, my sweet love, you will have made up your mind to be Mrs. Cashel."

And he departed from Barbara's presence. She sank upon the couch, pale, terrified, shuddering.

"Oh that I had died before I fell into his power," she moaned.

At that moment her fate seemed utterly hopeless.

She was shut within walls from which she could see no means of escape. Her friends would never guess where she was. The man who had abducted her, and held her prisoner, was wealthy, respected, and beyond suspicion.

What wonder that poor Barbara almost despaired?

She had no means of estimating time, save by instinct, so she did not know what time in the night it was, when Varcor entered with a waiter bearing food. Upon the waiter were bread and butter, a pie, jellies, part of a roast fowl, and a bottle of wine.

Barbara was awake, and mechanically glanced at what Varcor had brought. She beheld something there, beside the food, that stirred her numbed faculties. It was a knife, keen and sharp; how keen and sharp, Varcor had not noticed, else he would not have brought it.

Barbara advanced toward the man. A wild thought had flashed through her brain. A way of escape had suggested itself, yet it was a dreadful resort. But how could she endure to remain here!

Suddenly she snatched the knife, and, before Varcor dreamed of her purpose, she, with strength and courage born of the dread fears in her heart, struck him with the blade full on the breast.

He staggered, and, with a groan of pain, fell prostrate to the floor.

Varcor had locked the door behind him; but Barbara snatched the key from his grasp, and with trembling hands unlocked it.

"Heaven grant that I have not killed him!" Barbara thought; "but I was mad with despair, and could not keep from striking."

She glided out into the dark hall.

"May the merciful Father guide my steps!" was the girl's prayer.

Doubtless it was answered.

Barbara could only glide on, not knowing in what direction she was going.

All was quiet, and there was not a sound to tell her whither to direct her steps. On, on she went from one hall to another.

She reached a stairway, and descended it. And yet all was dark and still around her.

She continued to proceed noiselessly.

At length she came to a place where a ray of light shone through a key-hole. Bar-

bara crept past. She reached the door that opened out to freedom. But it was bolted and barred.

Cautiously Barbara turned the great key that she found in the lock. Then she began taking the heavy bars from their fastenings.

Her heart beat wildly; for she felt that in another moment she would breathe the air of freedom.

But, at that last moment, a bar dropped from her grasp, and fell to the floor with a crash; and, before the trembling girl could open the door between her and liberty, that of the library swung wide, and a flood of light streamed out into the hall. Henri Valasquez appeared, holding a lamp in his hand. The light fell upon the shrinking form of Barbara, and he beheld her.

"Shades of the demons!" he cried, "what does this mean?"

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE HOUR OF DOOM.

Valasquez sprang toward Barbara, but before he could reach her, the entrance door burst open with a crash, and instantly three men entered. One was a tall man, with a long red beard.

"O Mr. Victor!" exclaimed Barbara, springing into his arms, "save me from that man!"

"What means this?" cried Victor hoarsely, with terrible anger in his voice.

"He carried me away by force," sobbed Barbara, "and has been holding me prisoner. He wants me to marry him."

The two men who had come with Victor advanced toward the astonished and frightened Valasquez.

"Henri Valasquez, you are our prisoner," said one. "We arrest you for the murder of Lionel Cashel."

"Damnation!" cried Valasquez, thrown completely off his guard. "By the devils of Hades, how have you divined that?"

Then ensued a wild struggle. It was of short duration, however, and ended in Valasquez being securely handcuffed.

"O Mr. Victor!" Barbara tearfully entreated, when the struggle was finished, "take me away from this dreadful place, to my friends, — to Victoria!"

Then her sobs became more violent.

"But you must search first for that man

I stabbed, and see whether or not he is dead," she continued, between her sobs.

"Search for whom?" cried Victor.

Barbara explained.

"Indeed it is dreadful that I should have been compelled to do such an awful thing," she concluded, "but I could not avoid it. Oh, I hope he is not dead."

Evidently all of Barbara's courage and fortitude had deserted her. The thought that she had slain a human being, wicked creature though he was, was terrible to her.

And she could only be satisfied by Victor's going in search of Varcor, to ascertain his condition, accompanied by one of the detectives.

The other detective remained in the library, guarding Valasquez. He kept his hand on his revolver while the villain sat cursing in vain, wild anger.

Victor and his companion had been gone but a minute or two when the great clock in the apartment adjoining the library began to strike. It continued till it slowly rang out twelve strokes. It was midnight.

Scarcely had the last stroke of the clock echoed out, when there appeared at the door of the library a woman. She was a wild-looking creature, with long, black hair, and dark, blazing eyes, and had come from somewhere out of the darkness. She stood still for a moment, and then advanced to the side of Valasquez, who, beholding her, grew even paler than he had been before.

The detective thought she was mad, and rising to his feet regarded her closely.

"Henri Valasquez," she exclaimed, "I have come to announce to you that the hour of doom is at hand."

Valasquez sprang to his feet, and shook his manacled hands in her face.

"Do your worst, devil," he cried: "I defy you, I defy you."

The woman sprang back from him, her breast heaving, her breath coming in quick gasps, her eyes flashing out flame.

"Ha, ha!" she laughed madly, "you dream not of the sweet vengeance Eloisa, dear Eloisa, is to have, villain! Your defiance shall be turned to terror."

She turned toward the doorway.

"Come, Giorgio, good Giorgio!" cried she.

Instantly a giant form rushed in, beating the air wildly with his long arms. He grinned and gibbered hideously, looking as ter-

rrible as the inhabitants of the regions of despair might.

"Revenge, Giorgio! revenge!" cried the woman.

With a loud cry, the idiot, Giorgio, sprang toward Valasquez. The detective leaped forward with his revolver, but was hurled violently to the floor, where he lay bleeding and half senseless. The woman snatched the pistol from his grasp and stood over his prostrate form. At the first sight of the idiot, Barbara, whose nerves were already weakened, gave a wild scream and fainted dead away.

"Revenge, Giorgio! revenge!" the woman repeated.

The idiot seized Valasquez and held him firmly in his grasp. The villain's defiant manner vanished, and he stood terror-stricken, paralyzed with fright, not able to struggle even, while the hot breath of the terrible creature, in whose power he was, fanned his cheek.

"Mercy! mercy! have mercy!" he pleaded.

"You might as well ask mercy of the tiger whose young you had slain, as to ask it of Eloisa's mother," screamed the woman. "Monster! when did you ever show mercy? When did you spare youth, or beauty, or gentleness, or innocence, or love? Never! Demon! no power can save you! You are to die!"

There was one moment of dread, awful silence.

"Blood, Giorgio! blood!"

Those words were the signal of doom. With exclamations of delight, the idiot struck terrific blows on the face and head and body of Valasquez, who shrieked in pain and terror.

It was a wild and bloody scene.

"To the death, Giorgio! to the death," cried Signora Foscari presently.

The idiot hurled Valasquez to the floor, and locked his long fingers about his throat.

There was a brief struggle, and then all cries ceased.

Henri Valasquez, false master of The Cedars, had met his doom.

"Eloisa, sweet Eloisa," sounded in a wild, mournful wail, through the midnight stillness of the stone mansion, "sleeping beneath the skies of your sunny South, you are avenged."

When Victor and his companions return-

ed to the library, they found Barbara Lindsley lying on the floor, still in a dead swoon, while the detective who had remained was sitting in a chair, weak and shuddering.

Valasquez was stretched in the middle of the apartment, utterly lifeless, and battered and bruised out of all semblance to humanity.

The detective pointed to the bloody form and said, —

"Justice has been meted out speedily."

And he briefly described the wild scene that had just occurred, while Victor lifted Barbara in his arms, thankful that a blessed unconsciousness had come to her.

Victor carried Barbara to the carriage in which he and the detectives had come from Fairmount, and when she revived she was on her way to the De Vere residence.

Eloisa's mother, and the idiot, Giorgio, had disappeared. They were never again seen in the neighborhood of The Cedars, and nevermore was aught known of them.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE HAPPY END.

Barbara Lindsley and Victor were in the parlor at the De Vere mansion. No one else was present.

Barbara was still somewhat pale, but the scenes through which she had passed would work her no particular harm. She could smile and be happy, for she had been spared to life and love, and, further, the blow she had given Varcor the slave had not slain him, for, though he was severely wounded, he would recover.

And Victor had just said, —

"Dear Barbara, you bade me hope! Tell me, do you love me?"

He was sitting on a sofa by her side. She turned toward him, blushing.

"How could it be otherwise?" she murmured. "You are my hero, my knight, always at hand in my time of need, my good Sir Lancelot! Yes, I love you!"

Then they sat in silence for many happy minutes. Victor spoke at length.

"As you can guess, Barbara, from what I have said before, I have a revelation to make. My story is as strange as any romance that was ever written. Excuse my absence for a moment."

Victor stepped from the apartment. He was gone for a minute, and then Barbara,

sitting with bowed head, heard a step and raised her eyes.

A tall figure with handsome face, and the frank eyes of Victor, stood before her. But could it be Victor? The Victor that Barbara knew was the possessor of a long red beard, but this face had no such appendage.

"Mr. Victor!" Barbara exclaimed half doubtingly.

"Yes, it is he whom you have known as Victor," said the happy voice of the man. "But that is not all. I have at last a right to claim my own full, true name. It is Lionel Victor Cashel, and the man who was your foe as well as mine has wronged me out of it for years. Twice he tried to slay me, but each time I escaped as by a miracle."

Then Lionel Cashel told the surprised girl the story of his life. She was astonished, but made doubly happy by the realization that her hero was the true master of The Cedars. Here she could behold an end to all the dreadful litigation about the possessions.

"But, dear Barbara," Lionel concluded, "after all, the estate that Henri Valasquez held for so long is not mine. There is a claimant who has a better right to it than I, as I truly believe. She is, as I cannot doubt, the daughter of the deceased Herbert Cashel, while I am only his grand-nephew. Doubtless you have heard of the suit of Cashel *versus* Cashel?"

"Yes, I have heard of it!" said Barbara with a smile.

Then she rose and placed her hands on Lionel's shoulders with her face close to his.

"I, too, have a revelation to make," she whispered softly.

"What is it, darling?"

"I am the claimant to The Cedars, the daughter of Herbert Cashel."

"You?"

"Yes, I!"

Lionel kissed the beautiful face so close to his.

"It is the providence of Heaven, he said solemnly.

At that instant a tread sounded in the hall. In a moment Robert De Vere entered. He had just returned from Baltimore. It took him some time to recognize Victor, as he still knew Lionel.

But he did presently, and reached out

both his hands, one to Barbara and one to Lionel.

"Thank God!" he uttered reverently.

Of course he had previously heard of the tragedy at *The Cedars*, and the rescue of Barbara, for the whole country was ringing with the news.

Barbara and Lionel had Victoria Sherwood summoned before they told their strange histories. Then they narrated all, not forgetting to tell how the battle for *The Cedars* would end forever. Victoria, Vincent, Robert, all, were greatly surprised. Victoria shed some happy tears, and the two young men sympathized deeply.

When the narratives were ended Robert rose, and taking Barbara Lindsley's hand, placed it in Lionel Cashel's.

"She is my other sister," he said; "take her, and may heaven's richest blessing rest upon you."

It was months after the scene we last described, when Mr. and Mrs. Cashel, search-

ing through some papers in the library at *The Cedars*, found Herbert Cashel's will. They read it over together.

"Poor, dear papa!" murmured Barbara, when they had finished it; "he never dreamed that I was saved."

"No," answered Lionel dreamily, his thoughts seemingly far away.

There was a silence.

"Had I not known you and loved you, Barbara, my wife," said Lionel presently, breaking the silence, "I would never have taken *The Cedars*, even with this will in my favor to install me, for I should have felt that it would be wronging the daughter of the dead master out of her inheritance, — a wrong that I should have realized that he had never intended or dreamed should be wrought."

Barbara kissed him.

"I know you would not have taken it," she cried. "You are too noble, my prince of generosity, my hero, my good Sir Lancelot!"

## THE BEAUTY'S CHOICE.

BY ESTHER SERLE KENNETH.

Mrs. Hawley's prettiest boarder was the bit of a blonde girl named Florence Castleton. It was a romantic name, and she had a romantic history. Her parents were dead, she was the heiress of their property, and had a guardian. He had been in love with her mother, and was very jealous of the daughter's guardianship, treating her with arbitrary power, and teasing her quite as much as pleasing her by his affection. Yet it was quite exasperating to the young men to see her hanging on his arm, and he a handsome bachelor of hardly forty. He boarded at a hotel; she had Mrs. Hawley's prettiest set of rooms. They were furnished by herself, and most charmingly, in rose-wood and blue damask. She had canaries, and a parrot, and a King Charles spaniel, and a maid under her authority; and it was but a short time after her arrival, before every young man in the house was markedly subservient to her.

She was very pretty. Her hair was of a bright gold color, her cheeks rose-pink, and her eyes always made me think of blue larkspur, they were so deeply and glowingly blue. I have seen the sea show such a color, but seldom anything else; and they did not change like the sea, from blue to gray and black and Tyrean purple; they were always that deep, steady, unaltered blue. I have seen her wear dresses and sacques of the same shade.

She was a living romance heroine, and I used to observe the little episodes she occasioned in the house, with the expectation that she would finally occasion some serious rivalry or elopement, or break somebody's heart, and so give me the material for a story. But for several months she pursued the

even tenor of her pretty way and brought no one to grief, and I began to think no one was going to break his heart for her, after all, and that the beauty of the boarding-house would not furnish me with a story.

There were four young men in the house, Charley Childs, Fred Grove, Leonard Martin, and Dick Manchester, — all bright, agreeable, marriageable young men, and all admirers of Florence Castleton. Finally there was another, but he was too plain and bashful to be admitted to the elegant ranks of Miss Castleton's galaxy of beaux, and no one thought of his being any one's lover. His name was David Atwood. He was a book-keeper, was plain in dress, and evidently straitened in means. He had one of the smallest of Mrs. Hawley's side-rooms, spent all his days and most of his evenings in the office where he was employed, never went to theatres or the opera, and possessed not the slightest style of manner.

Yet I noticed him, from the first, as having a face of great sense and kindness, — a face pleasant to see, having so much seriousness and strength with its youth. Yet it was very plain, — the thin light hair falling lankly about a large, pale forehead, the eyebrows being almost imperceptible, the eyes of a light, yellowish gray, the nose and mouth large, and a characteristic blush rising and paling continually. His smile was sweet and pleasant; he looked good; and many a time I have turned from the shallow brilliancy of Fred Grove and the rattling gayety of Dick Manchester to observe David Atwood, quietly reading, with a sensation of relief, that there was yet some sense and real worth left in the world.

The others laughed at him, — he was so



shy and awkward and bashful. And Florence Castleton often joined the laugh, silveryly; yet no one offered him any disrespect. Indeed, they all acknowledged him to be "a good young man, but so homely and awkward!"

Florence Castleton had a pretty voice for singing, and used to play upon a guitar, a beautiful one inlaid with pearl which her guardian had given her. One evening, after David Atwood had been at the house about six weeks, she brought it down into the parlor, and sat down to play. The young men gathered round to sing with her. Young Martin sang very well, and Charley Childs sang better. When they were singing, David Atwood came in.

He slipped into a corner and sat down in his shy way, and was unnoticed until Dick Manchester, who was restless for mischief, called out,—

"Mr. Atwood, won't you come and sing with us?"

"I do not sing," he said quietly.

"Nor play?" asked Dick.

"Only upon the violin," he answered.

Florence was thrumming her guitar carelessly.

"Won't Mr. Atwood let us hear him play upon his violin?" asked Dick, glancing slyly at Martin as if he was starting game. All awaited Atwood's answer with a certain degree of interest.

"I have not used my violin since I came here. I will unpack it, and if none of the strings are broken, I will play," said Atwood; and he rose quietly, and went out of the room.

"How could you say that, Dick? He probably plays execrably," said Miss Jeanette Manchester, Dick's sister.

"I never knew a country bumpkin who had n't a fantasy for a fiddle," said Martin. "There, he's coming back! Now if any one has fastidious musical sensibilities, I'd advise him to decamp."

"I shall stay," answered Dick.

"We'll all stay and see the fun," said Grove, sitting down by Miss Castleton.

David came in. I began to understand what was coming as he bent his head over the violin and drew the bow lightly across the strings. In a moment he glided softly into an air of Verdi's, so light and graceful that it was like the fall of sea spray. Every eye and ear was given in rapt attention; some in delight, some in troubled doubt, as

if they could not believe their own senses, some in spleen or envy, and all in amazement. Astonishment was the prevailing emotion.

When he had finished the opera air, he asked,—

"Is there any tune you would particularly like?" and he glanced toward the side of the room where Florence Castleton sat, rather than at Dick and Martin.

"Will you play the 'Phantom Chorus' from 'Faust'?" asked Florence; and the mild, sweet tones came forth obediently, in beautiful perfection. Air followed air. The company sat spell-bound until the suddenly revealed musician laid down his bow. A chorus of eulogistic phrases and expressions of gratitude followed, but David Atwood smiled only at Florence Castleton's simple remark,—

"We thank you!"

He left the room. A little while after, I went through the hall, and met him.

"You have surprised and delighted us all with your performance, Mr. Atwood," I said.

He smiled.

"I learned to play to please a little sick sister I had once," he answered. "Since she died I do not care to play much, although I love music."

Just then Florence Castleton flitted by and went up the stairs. I thought she had heard what he said.

"Do you think she liked it?" he said, with amusing simplicity and directness.

"Yes, I am sure she did," I answered.

"She's pretty, isn't she?" said he, with the same amusing *nuivete*.

"Yes," I answered.

He sighed.

"Good-night," I said.

"Good-night," he responded, and went into his room.

I smiled at my thoughts as I let down my hair before my dressing-glass. Yet it might prove hardly a smiling matter for a poor honest fellow like David Atwood to get in love with Florence Castleton, the beauty and heiress.

It soon became perceptible to all observing people, how much David Atwood was in love with Miss Castleton. She divined it swiftly, and I thought it did not displease her. The others rallied her, but she put off their jests lightly, and was none the worse for them. Poor David did not address her;

He could hardly summon courage to approach her when necessary; and it was altogether beyond his plain, passionate heart to disguise his sensitiveness in regard to her presence.

He would turn pale every time she spoke to him, and once, when he brought her a chair in an awkward hurry, I saw him trembling like a leaf under her beautiful eyes. They were together that evening, with three or four others in the parlor.

"Miss Castleton," said a pretty little school-girl, who idolized Florence for her beauty, after the manner of school-girls, "your eyes are just the color of the water off Half-Moon Beach, where I saw it last summer."

Miss Castleton laughed.

"They are like summer skies," said Charley Childs.

"I swear that they are just like the binding of Owen Meredith, in blue and gold," said Dick Manchester.

"And what is your comparison, Mr. Atwood?" said Florence, looking up archly at David.

His answer was involuntary:—

"They are like the blue larkspur which used to grow in my mother's garden," he said.

Florence Castleton blushed; it was the only time I had ever seen her blush. Looking up, she suddenly met the eyes of her guardian, Mr. Gray, who was present. Rising quickly, she went to the piano, and, seating herself, played a light air.

That night a clang of fire-bells awoke me. I lay unaffected for a moment, until I suddenly perceived the odor of smoke. Rising quickly, I opened my door. The hall was filled with smoke, and there was a confusion in the house. The cry of "Fire! fire!" arose.

I flung on a wrapper, drew on slippers, and commenced putting my most valuable papers into my writing-desk. While I was doing this there came a quick step on the stairs, and a voice crying the names of all who slept on the landing. I opened my door again, and saw for the first time that the doors of all the other chambers were open, and the occupants had fled. It was a servant.

"Oh, come down, for Heaven's sake!" cried she. "The back part of the house is afire from cellar to roof, inside!"

There were doors in the halls shutting off

all the back part of the house from the front.

"Are all out?" I asked, flinging a cloak around me, and taking up my precious writing-desk. "Miss Forbes, Mr. and Mrs. Blake, Miss Houston and Miss Castleton?" said I, as I went through the smoky hall.

"God have mercy!" cried the Irish girl, "but I don't think Miss Castleton is out! I've not seen her! Oh! what'll I do?"

Just then a figure came leaping up the stairs.

"Go down!" he cried to me as he sprang past me.

He flung open the door between the two halls, a volley of smoke poured out, and I retreated. It was David Atwood. I knew instinctively that he had gone for Florence Castleton, and that she would immediately be safe.

Down-stairs the people were carrying out furniture, and the greatest confusion and consternation, mingled with much active energy, prevailed. The fire engines were coming rapidly up, and a great crowd were gathering. I was preparing to go across the street to the house of a friend, finding that I could be of no assistance, when my attention was attracted by the form of Mr. Gray rushing into the hall, at the same instant that Mrs. Blake put her baby into my arms for safe keeping, while she wrapped two little shivering forms in shawls, preparatory to putting them into a carriage for a friend's house.

Mr. Gray caught the arm of Mrs. Hawley, as she flew down the stairs with a pile of valuable clothing.

"Miss Castleton! Mrs. Hawley, where is she?" he cried.

"I don't know! I don't know!" she exclaimed despairingly. "Some one went for her. I have not seen her!"—

Mr. Gray interrupted her with an oath, and sprang to the stairs; but at that instant the figure of David Atwood emerged from the smoke on the stairway, with the senseless form of Florence Castleton in his arms. She had apparently fainted with fright, or been overpowered by the smoke. She was half dressed; her beautiful gold hair swept over David's arm, her white, unconscious face was clasped to his breast.

They carried her out into the air, and she soon revived, and was carried to the hotel where Mr. Gray resided.

The fire was finally extinguished, but the

house was very much injured, and rendered untenable until repaired. It was spring, and I went out of town, but that summer I received the following letter from Jeanette Manchester.

"MY DEAREST ESTHER,—I 've such news to tell you! Florence Castleton has married that horrid, awkward David Atwood, who is a fright, if he does play beautifully on the violin. It seems that he saved her from the fire, and she went into a passion of gratitude, and he told her he

loved her, and there was a pretty state of affairs for that aristocratic Gray, who is more than half in love with Florence himself, I believe. But they say that Florence said to him, 'Dear guardian, remember my mother,' and he gave right up and let her marry Atwood. I was n't at the wedding; she was married at the Grays' country seat, and they say that the bride wore blue larkspur in her hair. Horrid taste! and so forth.

J. MANCHESTER."

I smiled. I was very glad.

## THE DEAN'S DAUGHTER.

BY MISS JULIA A. KNIGHT.

The half-hour had just chimed from the cathedral spire, and the bells were softly ringing for even-song. The Dean stopped in his hurried walk across the close to shake hands with Robert Armain, the richest and handsomest man in Dodington.

"I want to speak to you, Bob, after service. Go in; the girls will entertain you."

Mr. Armain stopped at the Deanery gate and looked back over the quiet close.

"I'll ask Clare tonight. By Jove! I should n't like to be refused by that cold, stately woman! I don't think she would, but I'll ask Clare,—I'll ask Clare."

The Dean's daughter and niece were together in the drawing-room when Mr. Armain was announced.

"*Bon soir*, young ladies. I am your prisoner till the Dean returns."

"A willing one?" said the Dean's niece.

"Such captivity is better than freedom, Miss Margaret. How does the tatting get on, Clare? Still at it?"

"Yes," she answered, lifting her head for a moment, with a smile that made her dark earnest face almost beautiful.

"Don't smile so brightly, Clare. I have some sad news to tell you. John Morrison's regiment is ordered to India. He leaves Dodington tomorrow."

"Why do you call it sad? Jack is glad to go. Who but cowards would wish their swords to lie idle now? I should rejoice, if I were a man, to be able to help our poor country-people in India," exclaimed Clare, her dark eyes lighting up with the passionate fire of her nature.

Mr. Armain shrugged his shoulders.

"I won't pretend to judge Morrison's feelings as well as you, Clare. He did not look very delighted, though, at the prospect of falling a victim to some Sepoy's knife. We all would wish the poor things saved, but few care to be the sacrifice to redeem them."

Clare rose impatiently, throwing down her work.

"I am going into the garden. Flowers are better company than you this evening, Mr. Armain."

"Poor Clare!" he said softly, as she left the room.

"Why 'poor Clare'?" asked her cousin in her calm clear voice. She looked at him steadily, without a shadow of pain on the proud beauty of her face, though her heart was beating wildly with its grief.

"Can't you guess, Miss Margaret?"

"I think you have offended her, Mr. Armain. You had better go and make your peace," she answered coldly.

"That's easily made. Clare and I have always been good friends since I came to Dodington."

He left the room and went out into the sunny garden.

"Won't you leave the flowers and me to talk to each other?" Clare asked as he joined her.

"I want to talk to you; can you listen, Clare? It is about myself."

"Well?"

He hesitated a moment.

"It is terribly lonely at the Court, Clare; it wants a mistress."

She lifted her beautiful eyes to his, with a sudden light in them. Did he read the secret they revealed? He did, with sudden surprise and dismay, but he went on.

"I don't love your cousin much, Clare, but she is a fit mistress for my fair ancestral home. The Armaines have always married such beautiful, stately women to reign at the Court."

"Indeed! But why do you tell me this?" said Clare, speaking with her burning, tearless eyes upon the flowers.

"Won't you answer me as a sister, Clare? Do you think she would be my wife?" he asked.

"I don't know. Why do you trouble me with such questions, Robert? Ask Margaret herself."

"But, Clare"—

"For pity's sake go away! I will not listen." She turned away bravely, struggling with her emotion.

"Clare dear," Robert said, gently laying his hand upon her arm, "a woman's pride should be stronger than her love. Don't

reveal that you care for any one before he asks to know."

They were cruel words, but they brought back Clare's calmness.

"Thank you, Robert; when I do care for any one, I will remember your advice."

He left her without speaking again, and went back into the drawing-room. Miss Temple was standing at the window, the evening light falling brightly on her fair face and *etately* figure.

"A lovely evening," remarked Robert.

"It is. Where is Clare, Mr. Armain?"

"She will not leave her flowers. Miss Margaret, shall I tell you why I came to the Deanery tonight?"

"If you please."

"I came to ask you to be my wife. I cannot woo as some men, Miss Margaret. Give me a plain answer to my plain question."

She turned calmly toward him.

"I do not care for you, Mr. Armain. But there were no words of love in your question; there shall be none in my answer. I will marry you."

"Not loving me, Margaret?"

"You did not ask for love; I have none to give you. If I become your wife, Mr. Armain, I shall marry for wealth and position. You have my answer."

She spoke without a flush on her face or a quiver in her voice.

"Few women would be so candid, Miss Margaret. Why do you not care for me?" he asked.

"Love cannot be gained without being given, Mr. Armain. You care only for my beauty; you don't love me, — you don't understand me."

"It's a fair bargain, — your beauty for my riches," said Mr. Armain a little bitterly.

"A fair bargain," she repeated, and for an instant she laid her cold white hand in his.

It sent a chill through Robert Armain's veins, and Clare's brown eyes seemed to be looking at him again in mute, reproachful love.

"Not one word, Margaret, that I may remember till we meet again on earth or in heaven?"

They were standing in the garden among the flowers, Lieutenant Morrison and Margaret Temple, the latter now longer calm and

cold, but flushed and trembling, her eyes dim with tears.

"I am not worthy of your love, John," she answered; "I have sold myself for wealth. I am engaged to Robert Armain."

"Margaret, Margaret!"

"It is true; I shall be the mistress of the Court. Jack, I could never have been your wife; I could not marry a poor man."

"And you say you love me, Margaret. False, — cruel!"

"I do, — I do! Heaven help me! I cannot give my love to Robert Armain. It is all yours."

"Margaret, one moment before you go. We may never meet again, — I trust we never shall."

She paused silently. For a moment they looked at each other; then, suddenly breaking down, the young man hid his face in his hands, sobbing out, —

"O Maggie, Maggie! And I loved you so dearly!"

"Jack, don't, for Heaven's sake! The Dean is coming!" she exclaimed, glancing up the path.

"You leave us tomorrow then, my boy?" said the Dean as he drew near.

"Yes, sir, — I am come to say good-by."

"Clare is in the drawing-room. Come in."

"I will say good-by now, Mr. Morrison," said Margaret calmly.

The Dean's grave eyes were on them. They shook hands and parted.

Summer was casting down her crown of flowers, reapers were busy in the harvest-fields, and Robert Armain's wedding-day was drawing near. The sunny days that had ripened the fruits of the earth had taught Robert Armain what a terrible mistake he had made. The love he had scorned was more precious to him now than all the world beside, and he was plighted to Margaret. A few weeks before his marriage he was in the drawing-room with the two girls, Miss Temple was playing; her lover stood beside the piano, but his eyes were on Clare's face. The Dean's daughter was standing at the window, looking across the close with eyes that drooped a little beneath their lids.

"How do you like this new waltz?" asked Margaret.

"Very pretty," he answered absently. She looked up at him.

"Ah, you are not listening, — and Clare.

is in one of her day-dreams! I don't care to play to myself;" and Miss Temple rose and shut the piano in lofty displeasure.

Mr. Armain made no attempt to conciliate her; he turned away carelessly without a word, and crossed the room to Clare's side.

"Do play that waltz again, — it was beautiful, Maggie," she said, turning to Miss Temple.

"I am tired of playing, dear, — I want to write some letters," she returned coldly as she left the room.

Clare left the window, and took up her work.

"Maggie is looking very thin and pale," she said. "Going abroad will do her good."

Robert Armain paced the room without speaking. Clare's dark-brown eyes were driving all thoughts of honor from his heart. Clare went on steadily with her work, and for a while neither spoke. Suddenly he stopped before her, his handsome face pale with emotion..

"Clare, I did not think you would have spoken so calmly of my marriage."

She rose, flushing indignantly.

"Mr. Armain!"

He continued, —

"I know you love me. Clare, I knew it that night I asked your cousin to be my wife. Fool that I was! Don't let my mistake ruin both our lives."

"What do you mean?" she asked haughtily.

"Clare, I love you! For Heaven's sake be merciful! Say but one word, and you are mine forever."

She looked at him coldly, scornfully.

"I loved you once, Mr. Armain; but then I thought you an honorable man who would hold his plighted word sacred. Loose my hand, please."

"It is your pride that speaks, Clare; I know you love me. Let your love plead for me," he answered passionately.

"Love you, Robert Armain! I utterly despise you!" She snatched her hand away, and haughtily left the room, giving no heed to his pleading words.

"Clare, Clare, listen one moment!"

She dared not remain. Her pride, her keen sense of honor, her strong will, could not destroy her love; it was pleading wildly for Robert Armain as he spoke. In a moment more she would have been clasped in

his arms, — happiness gained, and honor lost.

Robert Armain spoke truly when he told Clare that her cousin was a fit mistress for his fair ancestral home. As lady of the Court she performed her part well, and Mr. Armain might well have been proud of the fair stately woman who ruled his household and bore his name, — his wife in all but the love that is the truest tie between man and woman. Bound together by vows exchanged before God's altar, they were farther apart in heart than before their wedding-day.

They sat together in the pleasant breakfast-room of the Court on the first anniversary of their wedding-day, lingering over their letters. Mr. Armain's coffee was untouched; he had pushed his plate back to rest his head upon his hands, while he read the letter before him. It was from the Dean. He had been abroad with his daughter during most of the past year; now they were come home.

"Clare is almost herself again," wrote the Dean; "with tender care I trust she will quite recover her health. She is so like her mother that it makes me tremble."

"So the Dean is come home," Mrs. Armain remarked, laying down the letter she had received from Clare.

"Yes," her husband answered.

"Clare seems very home-sick," his wife went on. "Dear child, I long to see her again."

"What did her mother die of?" asked Mr. Armain, without raising his eyes.

"Of decline when she was very young. The Dean almost broke his heart, I have heard my mother say."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Armain. He folded the Dean's letter and put it into his pocket. "Are you going to use the carriage today, Margaret?"

"Yes, I am going to Dodington. We have promised to be at Aversley this evening."

"I shall be ready to accompany you. Good-morning."

"Good-morning," she answered as she would have returned the salutation of a stranger.

Her husband left the room, and Margaret took up the morning paper, turning by the force of habit to the army news. But the interest it had had for her was gone. John

Morrison was in England; his spurs had been bravely won in India, but he had returned unscathed from his search for death. He was in England, — in Dodington, — though Margaret did not meet him till that afternoon. She was paying a call at an old friend's house when he was announced.

Captain Morrison! The title was not stranger to Margaret than the familiar face so strangely aged and worn. No longer the chivalrous lad that had won her love, but a stern, strong-willed man who held her heart in his keeping clasped the trembling hand she held out, and looked into her face with deep, sad eyes, so changed, yet with the same power to thrill her heart as of old. Nothing but the merest formalities passed between them, and, with a terrible dread weighing her spirits down, Margaret took her leave a few moments after his entrance. She had sold herself for wealth. Now, with bitter remorse that was worse than vain, she was beginning to count the cost, to see what a terrible bargain she had made.

The next day was wet and stormy. Margaret sat at the piano, playing a melody that sounded like an accompaniment to the sobbing of the wind through the rain. Her husband stood at the window, looking dismally out upon the lawn, where sodden leaves were driven to and fro and the great trees wailing above their dead children.

"Margaret!"

"Well, Robert."

The music died away in a long mournful chord.

"How horribly lonely it is! We must fill the Court with company this autumn. A few of these days spent in-doors would drive me mad."

"Why don't you go out? You can take the close carriage, you know," she answered satirically.

"Better do that than listen to the ghostly tunes you get out of the piano, — they make my flesh creep. For mercy's sake don't play any more! I say we must fill the house with company."

"As you please," his wife returned, closing the piano and taking up a book. Her calm face irritated him.

"I do please, then. One might as well have a statue in the house as you, Margaret. Can't you have pity on a fellow, and talk a little?"

She laid aside her book.

"What do you wish me to say?"

He paced the room before he spoke again. "I should like the Dean and Clare and Jack Morrison to spend a week or two here. Is there any one you would like to invite besides?"

"No; but, Robert, don't invite Captain Morrison."

"Why? I wish him to come."

"I don't wish him to do so, — I would much rather he did not indeed."

"Just because I like him, because his company would cheer me up a little! I know you too well, Mrs. Armain."

Margaret was deathly white, — her voice trembled as she spoke.

"Robert, I beg of you not to ask him here."

"I tell you I shall. It is utter nonsense. I shall ask him tomorrow. Have you the same objection to your cousin and uncle, pray?"

"If I am to receive all the visitors you choose to name, it is useless asking my opinion," she answered, taking up her book again and leaving the room.

Robert Armain strode out into the rain, not caring whither he went. Of all spots on the earth home was most hateful to him. He almost loathed the cold stately woman he had made his wife. He had married for beauty; and now he too in bitterness of soul was beginning to count the cost.

"Won't you come, Clare? Robert wishes it very much; and I need not say how glad I shall be to have you with me."

So spoke Mrs. Armain. She was standing by the fire in the Deanery drawing-room, her stately figure, in its sweeping silken robes, forming a strong contrast to the Dean's daughter. Clare was leaning back in her easy-chair, weary with the joy of coming home again. She was changed, — greatly changed. All the fire of love and hope had left her face. A sorrow-stricken woman she looked, save when she smiled the same sweet smile of old. That was unchanged. Sin alone can take away the beauty of a smile.

"You won't come then, dear?" said Mrs. Armain.

"No, Maggie. Don't ask me to leave my dear old home again. I feel better here; and — and — I'm not strong, Maggie."

Mrs. Armain did not answer. Her delicate hands were twisting nervously in each

other, and her dark eyes had a troubled look in them.

"Don't be vexed, dear," Clare went on. "You know papa could not leave his work. I know he would not."

"Why not say at once that you do not care to come?" said Mrs. Armain bitterly: "You are right. The Court is only a great state-house, not a home,—not a home, Clare. Stay in your own warm nest, birdie. Good-by."

"Don't leave me, Maggie, so coldly. I would come if I could. Don't be angry."

"Angry with you, my innocent, pure-minded darling! If I had not married for money, you would come perhaps; but a curse is resting on me. Who shall tell where it will end?" And, without waiting for an answer to her wild words, she kissed her cousin, and left the room.

It was more than three weeks later before Clare heard anything of the doings at the Court. One morning Robert Armain called. He was going to London by the noon express to stay a day or two on business.

"I am obliged to leave Margaret to entertain the visitors alone. I wish you could have come, Clare."

"Have you much company at the Court?"

"A couple of my old aunts, a distant cousin and his family, and Captain Morrison. I thought the Court was dull before, but it's worse than ever now. Every one makes it the aim of his or her life to thwart or annoy everybody else. You can imagine the result."

Clare laughed, and the Dean remarked, —

"Your duties as host must be no sine-cure, Bob."

"By Jove, no! It's the hardest work I have ever done. Captain Morrison is as bad as any of them. I never saw a man so changed in my life. But I must be off. When are your roses coming back, Clare? Good-by."

He shook hands with them both and hastened away.

Clare had been ordered to take riding-exercise. Her father had bought her a beautiful pony, and that afternoon Clare donned her riding-habit and cantered away through Dodington into the quiet lanes. Everything was very still and silent under the autumn sunshine, and Clare rode on with loosened bridle, thinking, not of the past, but of the future,—the mysterious future that might so soon lead her into the spirit-

land. For Clare knew that the danger the doctors feared was not over. Any sudden excitement, a chill, a keen sorrow, might break the silver cord, and, like her mother, cut her off in the flower of her youth.

A sharp turn in the road roused her. It curved along a low park paling to join the high-road. Clare hesitated. Close to her was a little gate leading into the shadowy leaf-strewn park. She knew the path well, and, pushing open the gate, cantered on under the great trees toward the house. She was in the grounds of the Court, and determined to surprise her cousin. She fastened her horse to the terrace pillar and ran up the steps into the hall. The peace of the autumn afternoon had fallen upon the house. Nothing was stirring. Clare went into the drawing-room, but the great room was solitary in its splendor, and she was turning away, when a low, stifled sobbing caught her ear. It came from the little inner room. The Dean's daughter crossed to the heavy curtains and softly parted them. Kneeling upon the floor, her proud head buried in her hands, was Margaret Armain. She was trembling with intense emotion, Clare saw, as she lovingly knelt down by her side.

"Maggie, Maggie, what ails you?"

"Clare!"

Her hands dropped from her face, which she vainly strove to bring back to its usual calmness. She rose slowly.

"Why have you come here? Who sent you?" she asked fiercely.

"I came to see you. No one sent me. What is it, dear? What sorrow have you which I do not share?"

"Nonsense! I was a little hysterical,—that's all, foolish child,—grieving because Robert is away," Mrs. Armain returned with a laugh,—such a laugh,—it made Clare shudder.

"Your face is more truthful than your voice, Maggie. I know you are in trouble; can't I help you to bear it? Don't you remember when we were children?"

"Good heaven!" Mrs. Armain exclaimed wildly, "do you wish to drive me mad? I must forget I ever was a child, ever anything but a lost woman,—lost, lost for this world and the next! Don't touch my hand,—don't come near me, Clare. I sold myself once for wealth, and found my golden servitude was misery; now I sell myself again, body and soul, honor and fair



name, for a little happiness. Loose my bands, Clare. Get up."

"No, no! Maggie, tell me what I think is n't true. Tell me I'm false to all our old love, to the love I bear you now, to think you could sin so deeply. Maggie, Maggie, tell me I'm wrong, for Heaven's sake, for your angel-mother's sake, for the sake of our happy childhood, — tell me it is n't true!"

For one awful moment there was silence in the room where Clare knelt at her cousin's feet. Then Margaret Armain unclasped the hands that clung to her, and answered, —

"It is. Get up and go home. You cannot, shall not save me. You will never see me again, — never!"

Clare did not rise or speak. A dumb, chill horror had crept over her. Her face grew cold and rigid; and, with a low cry, she fell forward upon the floor, unconscious.

Mrs. Armain lifted her up, and laid her upon a couch. As she bent over her in terror, the curtains parted, and Captain Morrison entered. A hot flush rose to his face as he recognized Clare. Even her white, still face had power to reproach.

"Is she ill?" he asked. "Has she fainted?"

Margaret turned to him. For a moment she could not speak; and never, in all the horrors of India, had Jack seen such agony as was written on her face.

"She is dead, I think," she said, in a strange, hard tone. "I have murdered her by telling her the truth. It needed only this."

For one moment Captain Morrison bent over Clare.

"Ring for help," he then said. "I will go for the doctor and the Dean."

He had left the house the next instant, on his way to Dodington.

It was dusk before Jack returned to the Court. In the hall he met the doctor, who answered sadly the young man's questioning look.

"She is dying, Captain Morrison. She has broken a blood-vessel."

"Dying, doctor?"

The answer was interrupted. Mrs. Armain came down the wide stairs to Jack's side.

"She wants you," she said.

Then, turning to his companion, she said, —

"Doctor, you are not going?"

"I shall stay here tonight, Mrs. Armain," he answered gravely.

She bowed, and turned again to Jack.

"Come."

He followed her up the stairs; but at the library door she stopped.

"I had nearly forgotten," she said. "I must telegraph to Mr. Armain."

Jack watched her while she wrote the few words, and gave directions to the servant, in wonder at her calmness.

"You must be very quiet," she said, as she joined him again, and led the way.

Once more she stopped, — at the chamber of death. A low voice reached them where they stood, and both bent their heads reverently. The Dean was praying with his daughter.

Something in the old man's voice touched Jack Morrison more than all; and, in an agony of remorse and sorrow, he knelt down by the chamber door, and wept.

Margaret looked at him wonderingly; but she did not speak.

There was a movement in the room. Margaret heard Clare's voice; and she opened the door, and entered.

The Dean silently clasped Jack's hand, and led him to the bedside.

"She wants to bid you good-by," the old man faltered.

"I am dying, Jack," said Clare faintly. "O Jack!"

She stopped. Her eyes spoke the rest, — all her fear and pain and sorrowful shame.

Jack bent over her, and kissed her, saying, —

"You have saved us, Clare. You have lost your life to save us."

"I am glad," she said faintly.

She closed her eyes for a little, and then she spoke again.

"Jack, won't you try to be a good man? We were always like brother and sister, you know. Won't you please try to meet me in heaven?"

"I will. I swear it, Clare. Heaven helping me, I will."

Margaret was standing by the bedside. At these words, she spoke.

"I cannot promise to be a good woman; but I promise, dear, to be a good and faithful wife."

There were few words spoken after this.

Through the evening the three watched in the silent room where death already cast its shadow.

Toward midnight another came to join them, — Mr. Armain. Clare knew him, and called him by his old, familiar name.

“You will be kind to Margaret, Bob?” she said.

Those were her last words. As another day was born, she died quietly, without a struggle.

Directly after the funeral, Captain Morrison left Dodington for India. He had thrown up his commission, and accepted an appointment in the City of Palaces.

Many years have passed since then; but Jack has not revisited his native land. He is a rich old bachelor, and many councils are held in Dodington as to who will inherit the money he has to leave.

The gossips talk, too, of the probable heir of the Court, which has become very much neglected. Mr. Armain has no children, — a fact that accounts in many minds for his worn, wretched face, and the faded beauty of his haughty wife. Day by day they are counting the bitter cost of marrying without love.

At rest within the quiet cloisters lies the Dean's daughter. After life's fitful fever, she sleeps well.

## THE DOCTOR.

BY H. A. BINGHAM.

"I wish," said Therese, as she sat by Mrs. Bundy's parlor window,—"I wish that doctor would trade horses, or dye his whiskers. I'm rather partial to sorrel as a color; but, as the prevailing hue of horse and chaise and driver, it becomes rather monotonous. One would like to be able to distinguish where they shade into each other."

Her audience laughed.

"I think the 'red planet Mars' must have presided over the destinies of Greenfield," said I. "Every other man I have seen since coming here has been red-headed."

"And every alternate one is lame," said Therese.

"It is probably the latest style here," I observed. "We have n't been here long enough to get the ways of the place, you know."

"Doubtless it is," said Therese. "And how lucky for the doctor that he is, in both these respects, 'the glass of fashion, and the mould of form'!"

Now, we were by no means given to making light of the misfortunes of our neighbors. But, as new-comers in Greenfield, we were bound, in the interests of science and philosophy, to take note of its peculiar phenomena, both natural and social. This not only suited our vocation, as connected with the Greenfield Academy, but served us well as a source of amusement. And sorely enough we needed it. The society of the place promised as poorly as possible in this direction; and we affected it but slightly beyond Mrs. Bundy's kind roof that sheltered Therese, and the cousinly domicile that existed as a special providence to me. This attitude of aliens and observers shall be pleaded to save our comments from any unkind flavor of personality; as, for instance,

concerning these phenomena of the red-haired and crippled fraternity, who could really be counted by dozens, and whom we gravely set down as indigenous to the soil. Especially should we be held guiltless of affront to the village doctor whirling by in a cloud of yellow dust, since he was a newer-comer than ourselves. Long before his advent, we had discovered the dearth of intellectual young men in this community, and bewailed it in the interests of civilization. Absolutely not a masculine youth with any pretence to culture beyond the range of our academy lads. To this rule we excepted one young man, who walked three miles to us to recite his Latin at evening after toiling in a tannery all day. But he was not only at that deplorable distance, but also younger by three years than our venerable selves. It may therefore be conceived with what rapture—all in the interests of civilization—we hailed the man when Dr. Thaddeus Bangs unfurled his standard to the village breeze.

Dr. Bangs was fresh from the East, he was evidently not a man of family, he was college educated, and otherwise satisfactory. His very defects were fashionable, as appears from the above conversation. And, though we had our harmless jibe at them, they were by no means allowed to neutralize our desire to make his acquaintance.

"Of course," Therese would say vehemently, when the subject came up between us for the dozenth time,—"of course we are not pining for the society of Dr. Bangs; only it would be refreshing occasionally to meet a gentleman of some cultivation, to whom one could talk something beside—what we talk here, you know."

Which was answered by a strictly philosophical curiosity as to whether he did n't find it rather slow here.

But fate was not propitious. We saw him daily as he went about his practice, driving by with that most singular turn-out. On our way to school we passed his office, on whose door was blazoned that rather singular cognomen, "Thaddeus Bangs, M. D." We met him often limping down the sidewalk with — I was going to say that singular red head of his, though it was singular only in being a shade or two more sanguine than the prevailing hue. But this was as far as we progressed toward an acquaintance. It was provoking to the last degree.

There was Cousin Phil, the amiable but rather vexing man of family with whom I resided, — he could meet the doctor at his lodge, smoke a cigar with him on the hotel piazza, and become acquainted at once. I resolved to turn this to account, especially after Phil declared in his favor, and pronounced him a "capital good fellow." We had surmised as much ourselves, and were all the more tantalized at our helplessness.

I told Mrs. Phil it was clearly Phil's duty to invite him to tea.

"Poor fellow!" said I, "there is nothing very attractive about his looks or appearance; but he is a stranger here, and I dare say has not been invited anywhere, or made an acquaintance outside the hotel and his patients. Phil ought, just in common courtesy, to help him along so much."

She answered precisely as if I had said, "Mrs. Phil, I wish you would coax Phil to invite the doctor down here, for I want to get acquainted with him."

"Very well," she said: "I'll help you all I can. I'll have Phil invite him tomorrow, and you can ask Therese over if you would like to have her here."

"Yes," I replied demurely: "that will be a good arrangement, because Therese is such a fine talker. She can take the whole burden of entertaining him."

"It would be so tiresome for you and me," she remarked with a somewhat overwrought gravity; "but then it is one of those disagreeable duties that must be done."

Accordingly she said to Phil at the table, —

"Our young ladies would like to have you inveigle the doctor down here to take tea with them tomorrow afternoon. They despair of ever getting an introduction otherwise."

"Certainly, certainly," he said, oblivious

of any remarks on my part. "I will let the doctor know at once how the case stands. Most natural thing in the world."

My cousinly trust in his good behaviour saved me from serious apprehension; and I presently tripped over to Mrs. Bundy's, exultant, and bore down upon Therese with all sails set.

"The die is cast," I solemnly announced. "The Rubicon is about to be crossed. The campaign is determined upon. Every Englishman is expected to do his duty. You are hereby commanded to encounter" —

"Dr. Bangs!"

"How did you know it was anything about Thaddeus?"

"Oh, nothing else in Greenfield could work you up to such a pitch."

"But does n't the event warrant the emotion?"

"Oh, fully, fully. Or doubtless I shall think so on further enlightenment."

I thereupon entered into particulars; and she proceeded to vex her philosophic mind with regard to suitable apparel. I could assist her in this dilemma only by the suggestion of red as evidently the doctor's favorite color.

Accordingly, after school next day, she sauntered over in a white dress, with a profusion of red ribbons in every conceivable mode of adornment. She had carried the fitness of things so far as to make a special outlay of her hard earnings at the village store for this most unbecoming smartness of attire.

We three expectant feminines entertained each other for an hour and a half. The table was set, the tea measured out in the urn, and the chairs placed.

"The biscuits will be spoiled," said Mary in a tone of vexation.

"And the cake will be dough," Therese added, with the face of innocence.

A period of silence, and Mary ventured some feeble surprise at the prolonged absence of Phil. But none of us had the temerity to mention the doctor.

But, lo! Thaddeus drew nigh. His head rose into view above the garden-fence like the ruddy beams of the rising sun. He and Phil had of course been enjoying that endless cigar, oblivious of passing time.

They entered. Dr. Bangs was welcomed by the mistress of the house, and formally, very formally, presented to the young ladies. He was seated. We remarked that it was a

fine day. We agreed that it had not rained for some time. We disagreed as to whether the indications were strong for a drouth. And then we were interrupted by the summons to tea.

Occupied at first with our mutual services in the tangible repast, we had not yet touched the border of the feast of reason, and so forth, when the open dining-room door was darkened by a small shadow, and a piping voice called forth, —

"Is the doctor here?"

Then, catching sight of our guest, the child's appeal changed to —

"If you please, sir, ma says for to come right down quick. The baby's took another fit."

The doctor made his regrets to Mrs. Phil, seized his hat and cane, and disappeared down the walk at a ludicrous pace, with a frightened child skipping on all sides to hurry him on.

When he was well out of hearing, Phil looked two dismayed young women in the face, and laughed immoderately.

"It's a manifest tempting of Providence," said he, "to get you and Bangs acquainted. Think of that suffering infant, and abandon your fell designs. I shall wash my hands of the whole matter."

"We're introduced, any way," was my triumphant rejoinder.

But much good did it do us. From this time forth, Dr. Bangs bowed and smiled — he had a very pleasant smile — when we met him on the street. When we were made nearly sick from a long tramp and a drenching shower, the doctor expressed his regrets to Phil that he had not discerned us in riding by, and saved us from the exposure. From his pharmacopœia Phil obtained a remedy for my toothache, for which slight service the doctor would accept no remuneration. We were in doubt whether to set it down to the score of friendship or charity. When Therese sang at twilight, he opened his office windows. He was even known to sit on the fence hard by, and listen to those dulcet strains.

So our acquaintance progressed.

It might have consoled us somewhat could we have set him down as a recluse from all society. But the facts forbade us to view him in this interesting light. While we went about our daily business, our doctor was not slothful in his; and from far and near we heard his name and praises

sounded. Among the rustic village maids he was quite a lion. We were not suffered to be ignorant of the fact of his dropping into this one's country school, and taking her home in the yellow chaise; of his praises of that one's music; of his calls, scarcely excused as professional, on yet another. A certain Miss Molly, with such charms of simple beauty and rustic health as comported with two hundred pounds of avoirdupois, and uncommonly simple of mind, quoted the doctor *ad nauseam*, and set forth his merits as, alas! such smitten damsels will. We were disposed, at first, to commiserate him for this calamity; but when, on the occasion of the "glorious Fourth," he actually took this blooming fair one in the yellow chaise to a neighboring "celebration," incredulity was cruelly silenced.

This, then, was our hero! this the congenial atmosphere for his ability and accomplishments!

"How art thou fallen, O Lucifer! son of the morning."

Thus Therese apostrophized sadly him of the flamboyant locks.

"Such is human nature," was the dictum of her companion from the serene heights of philosophy. "Have you never heard the saying, that great men always seek companionship for their lighter moods, and bear the burden of their greatness alone? Miss Molly is, according to this view, sufficient ballast for the most exalted genius. Besides, doctors generally admire a fine physique."

"Let them admire where they will, and joy go with them!" said Therese, with a toss of the head. "That is n't my grief. It is, that I have to doubt my own sagacity. I had labeled Thaddeus Bangs as a person of sense."

It was some weeks before our dampened ardor recovered itself. Even Cousin Phil, I think, was nonplused by this singular preference of his admired doctor's. It transpired, at least, that he rallied him about it in the midst of their cigars, and thereupon learned that the honest doctor was an unwitting victim to rustic arts. He overtook Miss Molly trudging in the dust to the "celebration," and took her in out of compassion.

"As he would have taken in certain other young ladies, had he found them, in a rain-storm, you know," quoth my aggravating

cousin, in parenthesis, when he told us the story. "He was so taken aback by my impertinence," continued Phil, "that, upon my word, I felt like apologizing, and did. Bangs is n't a lady's man, of his own accord, I take it."

This was the intelligence at which our spirits rose, and our confidence in humanity was restored. Our harps, so to speak, were taken down from the willows. Our faces turned kindly toward the solitary luminary of our sky, so near and yet so far. We must make the acquaintance of Dr. Thaddeus Bangs.

Was it happy chance or artful suggestion that induced good Mrs. Bundy, at this juncture, to propose a party in honor of her boarder? It was ostensibly to celebrate our vacation.

Therese announced the event as if it were something of a bore, but not without a certain mischievous gleam of the eye.

"And will Mrs. Bundy invite the doctor?" I inquired, with an indifference as sublime as her own.

Are we people to be baffled in an undertaking? demanded the Minerva of the Greenfield Academy.

And then and there began the schemes to make this evening a brilliant one in the annals of Greenfield. Music, tableaux, and intellectual games divided attention with the dainties of the collation. We even discussed Chinese lanterns and dancing on the green; but concluded that a consideration for the prevailing lameness forbade the latter, while the profusion of flaming locks would render the former superfluous.

A driving rain-storm on the appointed evening proved the wisdom of our decision. Nevertheless our guests were out in excellent force.

"All here," said Therese to her coadjutor at the latest possible moment, — "at least, all but Dr. Bangs; and I think we may as well go on with the tableaux."

We had "gone on with the tableaux" with considerable success, when between scenes we descried the pale countenance of the doctor, set in its accustomed halo, on the outmost verge of our audience. From that dim distance he bowed and smiled. It was comical to be greeted again with that eternal bow and smile!

From this moment our tableaux seemed "possessed." The parlor doors had been unhung, and a curtain filled the space. It

was inclined to fall apart at the centre, and one of our *dramatis personæ* took the precaution to pin it together. In blissful ignorance, we prepared our next tableau, intended to be particularly pathetic, and entitled "Smiles and Tears." The bell was touched, and frantic were the pulls at the curtain, producing only a round aperture in the centre. The smiles and the tears were equally a failure, except with the audience, who smiled audibly until the tears came.

This prepared the way for the final catastrophe. The poor curtain resented such violence, and, in the midst of the solemn scene of "Ruth and Naomi," came down altogether, when the majestic Naomi, to use her own expression, "giggled," and ran into the dressing-room. Thus ended the tableaux.

The music prospered better, thanks to the undivided attention and the noble voice of Therese.

As for me, I was instantly whisked away by Mrs. Bundy to give aid and comfort with regard to the collation.

A glance had shown us Dr. Bangs in the safe keeping of Miss Molly, from whom we felt no immediate mission to rescue him.

"After the music," doubtless Therese said.

"After the collation," thought I. "Let us first retrieve ourselves, and then hope to find him amiable."

That our guest was amiable, even radiant, we had speedy proof. There was great merriment in his corner, where, in company with Cousin Phil, Mrs. Bundy, and others, he did justice to the collation. A game of proverbs seasoned the repast; and, passing to and fro, we caught the sallies, — "Love's labor lost, — Molly C.;" "Persecuted, but not forsaken, — Dr. Bangs." There seemed to be great point to the joke, though we heard too little to appreciate it.

When we were free to seek that charmed corner, its chief luminary had departed. From the hall he gave us successively a bow and the touch of a hand, his hat and cane being in the other.

"I must say good-evening and good-night, young ladies," he said, with stately courtesy. "I have to thank you for a most enjoyable evening."

"We are glad to have entertained you," said Therese, with charming candor, "but sorry you must go so early in the evening."

Are we never to become acquainted with you?"

"I hope so," said one of the pleasantest voices in the world. "I trust so, very soon, and under more favorable circumstances."

And he bowed himself away.

Therese looked at me, and smiled, — the calm smile of despair. More favorable circumstances, indeed!

"How did you enjoy the evening?" I asked her after the revel was done.

"How did you?" she rejoined.

And the two queries remained forever unanswered.

The next day Mrs. Bundy took us into confidence, and besought advice in her household affairs. She had an application for other boarders, and might wish to rearrange her rooms.

"Who was the applicant?"

"Dr. Bangs. I had a long talk with him about it last evening."

A triumphant glance shot between us.

At last!

"I should think the doctor might be accommodated so and so," said Therese, with admirable nonchalance.

"Yes; but it's the doctor and his wife, you know."

I looked out of the window; Therese, anywhere but at me.

"Ah!" she said serenely, "that will be very pleasant. Do you know where she has spent the summer?"

"In the East, with her family, I believe. He started after her this morning."

We gave the most elaborate advice, nor showed sign or hint of our inward state till we were fairly up-stairs, and the doors were closed behind us. Then we looked long at each other, with a very funny look.

"Of — all — things!" said Therese.

"Well! — well!" said I.

And then I must confess we laughed to the point of suffocation. As philosophers, we were bound to enjoy the joke as well as if it were not turned against ourselves.

I saw no more of the doctor. Before his return, I was suddenly called away from Greenfield, and into regions where a gentleman was not such a *rara avis*.

But, thanks to Therese, I was not suffered to lose interest in his case at once. A few paragraphs from an early letter of hers may fitly round our mutual experience of his acquaintance.

"I have become acquainted with the doctor," she wrote, with three exclamation points; "and find him, as I knew I should, charming. And his wife — ah! you should make her acquaintance. She is a woman after my own heart, and yours too. She is by no means simple enough to mate with such greatness, according to theory; but it has come about for once, and quite romantically too. Who would ever have suspected Thaddeus of romance?"

"They were married some months ago, when he was disabled by the accident that caused his lameness, and so needing her care. This was away from her home; and as the time had long been set for the marriage this summer, at the same time with that of her only sister, and as neither of them were really ready to begin the world together, it was decided to practically adhere to the original programme. Our doctor comes here to establish himself, his wife makes her bridal outfit, and the dear public are saved their comments till the waiting is over.

"But what need of concealment here, you will say? None in the world, I suppose, except that men keep a secret when they have one. Had he supposed it a matter of public interest, I doubt not he would have proclaimed it from the house-tops.

"And, finally, shall I reveal to you the true reason why our acquaintance prospered so much less than that of Miss Molly and others? Bashfulness, pure and simple! This distant and inaccessible Adonis was actually afraid of us! Between us, I think it was this sailing under false colors that abashed him; and his instinct in the matter was quite right, don't you think? He used to sing with us at twilight, across the distance, — he is a charming singer, — and wish he had the courage to come over; and, at the very time we were bewailing his poor taste in associates, he was writing Mrs. Thaddeus that she would find at least two congenial spirits in Greenfield.

"P. S. — I have acknowledged that we used to wish he would come in when we knew he was listening to the music; but never a word more, on my honor.

"P. S. No. 2. — Although the lameness is accidental, I am confident the roseate locks are nature's own."

## THE GREEN PARROT.

BY MARY FRANCES WILLIAMS.

"Gladdys! Gladdys!"

Oliver Lukemar stopped suddenly, looking about him with eager, startled eyes, in whose unquiet depths burned all the long-buried love and hope that sprung to life in his heart when he heard that sweet Welsh name. But he only saw a freckled girl standing in the doorway of a low, brown house, and shaking out the crumbs from a dirty table-cloth.

Up and down the narrow lane, and out to the breezy common beyond, his anxious eyes went searching vainly; there was no other form in sight. The light died away from his face, and his weary sigh was followed by a half-smile at the folly of his thought; the thought of looking in a back lane of that dull New-Jersey village for the graceful, brown-eyed lassie who had roamed beside him through the mountain glens of far-away Cairninglis.

"O Gladdys!" he murmured, with regretful tenderness; and, as if the air sent back an echo, that voice cried again, —

"Gladdys! Gladdys!"

He looked again toward the cottage, and saw a green parrot in a wooden cage that hung beside the door; and the bird, as it crawled up and down the narrow slats of its cage, kept repeating "Gladdys! Gladdys!" as if the name were all its stock of speech. Oliver's face grew white and startled again, for he well knew the lazy old bird, of which he had sometimes threatened to be jealous, she loved it so; and he would have had her love no one and nothing but himself.

But that was over the sea, and years ago; and his little Welsh beauty was Lady Duneddin now, he supposed. Then, how came this bird here?

Stepping forward, he leaned over the board fence, and abruptly addressed the freckled damsel, —

"Is that your bird?"

"Av coorse it is!" retorted she indignantly. "Would ye be thinkin' I stole it, bad scan to ye!"

He had not thought of that, but the words were a clew to the puzzle. Probably the bird had been stolen; she would not

willingly have parted with it, even to a friend.

"By no means; I did not mean anything," he apologized to the irate girl. "It is a fine bird; where did you get it?"

"My cousin brought it from New Yorruck; and you 're mighty pryin' indade!" and she disappeared within the house, slamming the door emphatically.

Oliver walked away, casting a lingering look at the bird, as he went; and then he muttered something not very complimentary to his own sense. To be sure, it was none of his business; he had loved sweet Gladdys Avoy, — oh, more than passionately he had loved her! — but Lady Duneddin was nothing to him. If Gladdys Avoy had lost her pet bird, he would have crossed the sea to take it back to her; but he would have looked well setting sail for Edinburgh, to carry an old green parrot to my lady the Countess of Duneddin!

So he walked back to town, and tried to dismiss the old memory from his mind; tried, but did not succeed, of course; for we all know how these haunting memories cling to the troubled mind, and will not be shaken off.

It was not an uncommon story, this buried romance of Oliver Lukemar's life. A young student tourist, loitering among the highlands of Wales, fate, in the shape of a broken arm, had thrown him on the hospitality of Cairninglis, the little mountain village where Gladdys Avoy lived. He met and loved her, and his love was returned; but when he came to ask Gladdys of her father, there was an end of the bright romance, for old Griffith Avoy was rich and proud, and meant his daughter to marry his friend, the Earl of Duneddin. So Gladdys, when bidden to choose between love and obedience, wept and sighed, and declared her heart was broken; but she chose obedience and the earl.

It was not at all heroic of Gladdys; she was very weak and yielding; and Oliver, who would have set the whole world at defiance for her sake, left her with his heart full of contempt and bitterness, but



loving her still, in spite of himself, poor fellow.

He had wandered about a great deal in the four years since then, and at last had drifted back to his American home, changed enough from the free-hearted young fellow that he was when he went away. His sisters admired the change, and declared that foreign life improved a man amazingly, and that he had acquired so much more style and manner, *since he left them*, "nothing in the world but an overgrown school-boy!" But his mother, to whom alone he told the story, knew that he had lost more than he had gained; that all the grace of travel and the polish of continental society could not atone for the lost freshness of his youth, and the light-hearted trust in the world, which had vanished with his faith in the woman he loved.

But when his mother, at dinner, noticed his pre-occupation, and asked its cause, he did not tell her that he had seen Gladdys Avoy's parrot: he only said that he felt "blue."

"No wonder," observed one of his sisters. "You make a perfect recluse of yourself, Oliver. Do come to Mrs. Garrett's with us, this evening?"

Oliver thanked her, but he could n't, really; had to go back to the city by the next train. For Oliver was a New-York business man, home for a week's holiday at his mother's house, in the little city of Bordentown; and business must not be long neglected. So, on the first train for New York, he was a passenger.

But somehow, he could not get those newly awakened memories out of his mind; and strolling down Clatham Street, the next day, he forgot the bustle and hurry of the crowd about him, in thinking of the sweet past, so dear, though lost. All that he heard amid the Babel of sounds, was the voice of that green parrot, calling "Gladdys! Gladdys!" And all that he saw was the slender figure and lovely face that bore the cheery, homely name.

And—surely it was no vision! it was actual reality! Among ten thousand, he would have known the form that came out from the door of a pawnbroker's shop, and hurried away up the busy street. Yes: it was Gladdys Avoy.

In the great joy of seeing her there, he forgot to be surprised. A wild, undefined hope had sprung into his heart, when that

dear, familiar figure crossed his path, and that hope left no room for any other emotion. Swiftly he followed her hurrying steps, up one street and into another,—a shabby, poverty-stricken street; and at last he stood beside her, just as she was entering the doorway of a tenement house.

He put out his hand to detain her, and she turned suddenly, and faced him. His own Gladdys; there was no look of Lady Duneddin in the sweet, sorrowful face. Very sorrowful and pale indeed, but the same dear face he had remembered so well.

"Gladdys, my own darling!" he cried, rapturously stretching out his arms to clasp and hold her.

She did not utter a cry or speak a word. The pale face grew ashen white, and a dizzy look came into the great brown eyes. She would have fallen, but he caught her in his strong arms, and bore her into the house. They brought her back to consciousness, and so soon as the white lips could speak, she fluttered,—

"Was it—did I see?"—

The words ended in a sobbing cry of joy, for Oliver was at her side; and the next moment she was weeping on his breast. Close, close to his loyal heart he held her, murmuring in his great happiness,—

"This hour atones for the past four years!"

And then she told him how her father had died by an accident, and all his entailed wealth had gone to the male heir of the name. Her relatives had given her a home at first, but afterward turned her from it, because, now that her father's authority was gone, she would not marry the earl.

She had tried teaching; first, at home, but was unsuccessful: and so she had taken the little that was left to her, and crossed the sea to America; thinking to find, in that new land, some way to earn her daily bread. But here, also, teaching had failed her, and at last, like so many another, born and bred to wealth, she was reduced to sewing for a pittance that barely brought her the means of living.

Her scanty earnings hardly sufficed to buy her bread alone; more than once she had been to the pawnbroker's shop, and this time she had carried the last of her treasured mementoes, and exchanged it for money with which to replace her worn-out

clothing. The parrot, to which she had clung until poverty forced her to part with it, had been sold long before.

"But you shall have it again," said Oliver; and he had told her where he had seen the bird, and how moved he had been to hear it call her name. Now he would buy it back for her, his long-lost love, his wife.

And so Mr. Lukemar astonished his sisters, and delighted his mother, by bringing home his lovely, brown-eyed wife; and also the happiness which had left him when he lost her. In the sitting-room of their home on Madison Avenue, hangs a gilded cage where the green parrot still swings, and chatters, in its cracked old voice, of Gladys and bonny Cairninglis.

## THE HAND AND THE MASTER-FINGER.

BY PROFESSOR JAMES MACKINTOSH.

The hand, most eloquent of the body's silent members, stands man in good stead when trumpeter tongue is mute. "By the motion of the right hand," says quaint old Holme, "we crave silence; by clapping hands we express joy and gladness, and that we are well pleased with what is done; by laying the hand upon the breast we show a truth and earnestness to be in us; by striking our hand upon the thigh we tell we are moved with admiration; by striking the breast with the fist we give token of sorrow and repentance; by erecting and shaking of the right hand aloft, military persons notify any prosperous success; by a beck of the hand we call a person to us; by pointing out with the fingers we give directions; by stretching out the fingers 'gripen' we show we are filled with wrath and fury, and threaten revenge; we bless or curse by a lifting up of the hands; and by laying the right hand upon the Book oblige ourselves, by a solemn oath, to declare the truth."

In Morocco the number "five" is never mentioned in the Sultan's presence, because five is the number of the fingers of the hand; and the hand, as the wielder of sceptre, sword, and pen should be, is the symbol of authority all the world over. This gives a meaning to the custom of saluting a ruler's hand by way of homage, and no courtly ceremony can boast a greater antiquity than that of kissing hands. Priam, supplicating Achilles to restore the body of Hector, calls himself the most miserable of men in being forced to kneel before the murderer of his children, and kiss the hand yet reeking with their blood. Roman soldiers kissed the hand of their generals; consuls, tribunes, and dictators permitted a favored few to pay them the same mark of respect. Under the emperors, kissing the imperial hand was held an essential duty, on the part of courtiers of high rank; and, taking a leaf out of the Pagan's book, as was too much their habit, the bishops of the early Christian Church gave their hands to the lips of inferior ministers. The wearers of the triple crown were content with be-

ing honored in the same fashion, until one of the Leos, not caring to exhibit a mutilated hand, substituted his foot, and no one daring to protest against the innovation, his successors were careful not to resort to the less abject ceremony. It may be doubted if any pope would have persuaded Cardinal John of Lorraine to kiss his toe. When the Duchess of Savoy proffered her fair fingers to that lip-loving churchman, he declined the favor with disdain, declaring he was accustomed to make free with the lips of the greatest queen in the world, and was not going to do less by a dirty little duchess. Then, seizing the astonished lady by the waist, the bold cardinal, spite of struggles and perturbations, kissed her thrice upon the mouth. With equal disregard for etiquette, but with more simplicity, did the country dames, to whom Charles the Second presented his hand, put up their lips for the king to kiss, a breach of custom the Merry Monarch readily forgave; forgave, we may be sure, with more sincerity than James the First forgave Sir Henry Yelverton for speaking disrespectfully of his countrymen, when, in token of pardon, he allowed the indiscreet orator to kiss his royal hand thrice ere he left the presence. Kissers at court are, we believe, forbidden to appear with their hands gloved. It was not always so, for in a letter dated 1615, we read, "This day my Lord Coke, with his gloves on, touched and kissed the king's hand, but whether to be confirmed a councillor, or cashiered, I cannot yet learn." From kissing hands at court came kissing hands in courting, a practice the learned Selden considered as foolish as to eat the paring of an apple when one might taste the fruit itself; and from kissing hands for love, came kissing hands for politeness' sake, and the use of the phrase, "I kiss your hand," as a salutation upon leaving-taking, without a thought of suiting the action to the word.

A story is told of an old laird, who, being presented to George the Fourth at a levee, in his ignorance and anxiety to get through the business, ignored the hand extended to

him, and, with a hasty bow, edged toward the door with all speed. Brought up by Lord Erroll's whispered reminder, "Kiss hands! kiss hands!" the startled old gentleman, facing about, kissed both his hands at the king, as if wafting a cordial recognition to a friend at a distance. All unconsciously, the laird was acting according to ancient rule, for only the greater subjects of the later Cæsars were permitted to press their lips upon imperial fingers. Inferior folks kissed their own hands, as they were wont to do upon entering the temples of the gods; a custom Pliny set down among those which were followed for no known reason but their antiquity. This sort of finger flattery was not unknown in England. Spenser describes a brave and rightful courtier as one who —

"Unto all doth yield due courtesy,  
But not with kissed hand below the knee,  
As that same April crew are wont to do."

When Grumio arrives home with the news that Petruchio and his bride are near at hand, he says, "Call forth Nathaniel, Joseph, Nicholas, Philip, Walter, Sugarsop, and the rest. Let their heads be sleekly combed, their blue coats brushed, and their garters of an indifferent knit; let them curtsy with their left legs, and not presume to touch a hair of my master's horse-tail till they kiss their hands!" In one form or another, kissing hands, in respect to sovereigns and superiors, is practiced in so many parts of the world, finding equal favor with the savage as with the civilized, that it may be said to be all but universal.

"Who is he that will strike hands with me?" asks Job. "A man void of understanding strikes hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friends," saith the wise king of Israel. In the old-world custom of striking hands, hand-shaking, no doubt, originated; for, before it became a mere friendly greeting, a shake of the hand was accepted as a pledge. When Ferdinand and Miranda strike their tender bargain, he says, "Here is my hand;" and she replies, "And mine with my heart on it." Dunbar, Lord Treasurer of Scotland, congratulating Yelverton upon having made his peace at court, said to him, "I will desire your friendship, as you do mine, and I will promise to do you my best; wherein, as pledge, I give you my hand!" And so, shaking Yelverton by the hand, he bade

him farewell. Nowadays, a shake of the hand may mean very much, or nothing at all. The strong, hearty grip for grip of two old, long-parted friends, meeting unexpectedly, is one thing; the nerveless, loose, indifferent clasp of acquaintanceship, another. Sydney Smith attempted to classify hand-shakes, dividing them into the high-official, the sepulchral, the digitary, the *shakus rusticus*, and the retentive. The first was practiced by the then Archbishop of York, "who kept his body erect, carried your hand aloft to a level with his chin, and gave it a rapid, short shake." Sir John Mackintosh affected the sepulchral, "laying his open hand flat on your palm so coldly you were hardly aware of its contiguity." The digitary — in favor with the high clergy — was adopted by Brougham, who used to put forth his forefinger, with, "How arre you?" The *shakus rusticus* was having "your hand seized as in an iron grasp, betokening rude health, a warm heart, and distance from the Metropolis, but producing a sense of relief when your hand is released with the fingers unbroken." The retentive shake being that "which, beginning with vigor, pauses, as it were, to take breath, but without relinquishing its prey, and before you are aware begins again, till you are anxious as to the result, and have no shake left in you." The witty canon might have added to his list by going a little farther afield — say to California or Norway — which, having nothing else in common, are both tremendous countries for hand-shaking. Of the latter, a writer says, "If you give your currie-boy a few shillings, he at once shakes hands; if you hold out an oat-cake to a beggar, he will employ the same token of friendship; even a gypsy-woman, who is accommodated merely with an ember to light her pipe from, will fervently grasp your hand in thanks." The simple, good-natured peasants of Coburg acknowledge a favor in the same way. When Queen Victoria paid her first visit to the duchy, she tells us, that, while sketching in a field, "One or two of the women, who were making hay, came close to me, and said, as all the country people do here, 'Guten abend' ('Good even'), and, upon my replying something about the weather, one of them began to talk. She had two little children with her; I gave her some money, and she shook my hand for it."

If there be anything in chiromancy, ev-

ery man may be said to carry his life in his hand, since he can read in its lines all that has happened, and is to happen, to him; while the adept in chiromnomy, if he has not his destiny at his fingers' ends, can, by taking note of their shape, find out what nature designed him for, and shape his course accordingly, and, by so doing, show himself as wise as the ancient physicians who were careful to use only the fourth finger in mixing their medicines, in the faith that if it came in contact with anything hurtful to human health, it would signify the same to the heart of the mixer. To this fanciful nervous connection between the heart and the fourth finger, the latter is said to owe its being chosen to bear the golden circlet of marriage. 'Tis distinction, however, it has not always enjoyed. Some have assumed that the thumb-ring was an emblem of widowhood, whereas it was the sign of wifehood. In one of his controversial pamphlets, Milton says of an opponent, "He sets one out half a dozen phthisical mottoes, hopping short in the measure of convulsive fits, in which labor the agony of his mind having escaped narrowly, instead of well-sized periods, he greets us with a quantity of thumb-ring posies." That these posied thumb-rings were wedding-rings is shown by Butler charging the Puritans with wishing to abolish the tool with which the bridegroom was married to a thumb; and Tom d'Urfey, when describing a rapid act of courtship, writes thus:—

"Ere three days about were come,  
The ring was put upon the thumb."

In old days, the thumb received the ring as the bridegroom promised to endow the bride with all his worldly goods; and, after passing successively to the second and third fingers, when "Amen" was pronounced, it rested on the fourth finger, to be replaced upon the thumb at the end of the ceremony. Upon the master-finger ladies wore their wedding-rings down to the time of George the First, following aldermanic fashion. "When I was about thy years, Hal," says Sir John, "I was not an eagle's talon in the waist; I could have crept into any alderman's thumb-ring." It was upon her thumb, too, that Chaucer's Canace placed the magic ring, enabling her to hold commune with the birds, and to divine the hidden virtues of every plant that grew.

The thumb was certainly the fittest bearer of matrimony's badge, seeing that oaths ratified by it were held irrevocable. Once upon a time a northern princess took the veil, before it was discovered that state policy required she should become a wife. A dispensation was obtained, but, unlike the positive maiden in the song, the princess was determined she would be a nun; and, when threatened with force, placed her right thumb upon a sword-blade, and swore she would marry no man. She had her way, for not even the pope could overcome that oath. The phrase, "under my hand and seal," ought, perhaps, to run, "under my thumb and seal;" for Ducange tells us, that, in the middle ages, the pressure of the thumb upon the wax was the usual form of ratifying important documents; a statement borne out by a verse of an Elizabethan love ditty, —

"I thank you, Doron, and will think on you:  
I love you, Doron, and will wink on you.  
I seal your charter-patent with my thumbs:  
Come, kiss and part, for fear my mother comes!"

"We may lick thooms upo' that!" says an Ulster man in token of agreement; and the old custom, common to the ancient Iberians and the Goths, and in vogue among modern Moors, of completing a bargain by the licking and joining of thumbs, was not extinct in Scotland when Erskine wrote his Institutes. Decrees are yet in existence, sustaining sales upon the ground that the parties concerned had licked thumbs. This mode of binding an agreement was used to strange purposes in 1642. Sergeant Kyle, of Sir James Montgomery's regiment, having some words with Lieutenant Baird, threw down his glove by way of challenge. Baird, having no glove handy wherewith to answer the gage, licked his thumb, and said, "There is my parole for it." "When?" asked Kyle. "Presently," was the reply. Kyle slipped out of the house. Baird followed, with his sword drawn, and in five minutes was a dead man. Another thumb-licking device, fraught with less fatal consequences, but apt, nevertheless, to lay lovers of big bumpers down among the dead men, was that called "drinking super-nagulum." The drinker, after emptying his cup, turned it bottom upward, and with a fillip sent the last drop upon his thumb-nail, and then licked it off. If the drop proved

too big, and ran off the nail, he was held to have shirked his liquor, and had to drink a second bumper by way of penance. According to Lamb, the art of broiling, and the virtues of roast pig, might have remained forever unknown, had not Bobo burned his fingers, and licked them to sooth the pain. A similar accident proved a lucky one to the Irish hero, Fingal. He served a giant, who, after persevering for seven years, at last succeeded in hooking and landing a salmon possessing the property of communicating the gift of prevision to the mortal who ate the first mouthful of it. To cook this wonderful fish was Fingal's task. Omitting to turn it at the proper time, a blister rose on its side; he, in affright, pressing it down with his thumb, of course got burned; and equally, of course, put his thumb into his mouth, fortunately with a bit of salmon attached to it. The power his master had toiled so long to win was Fingal's, and he wisely quitted his service without giving notice. The angry giant was not long in following the runaway: but it was a hopeless stern-chase; for, whenever Fingal felt a pain in his thumb, he became aware of danger at hand, and learned the way out of it directly he put his thumb to his mouth; and this useful quality Fingal's thumb retained ever afterward.

Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein, smiting Dickon Draw-the-Sword with his gauntlet, that worthy "right little said, but bit his glove and shook his head." A fortnight later, and Conrad's corpse was found in Inglewood.

"Unknown the manner of his death,  
Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath;  
But ever from that time 'twas said,  
That Dickon wore a Cologne blade."

Scott—whose habit of writing notes to his works might be advantageously imitated by the poets of the present day—says that to bite the glove or the thumb was a Border pledge of mortal revenge; and in illustration relates how a young Teviotdale laird, upon discovering on the morrow of a hard drinking bout that his glove had been bitten, insisted upon knowing with whom he had quareled, as he must have satisfaction, although he remembered nothing at all about the matter. His curiosity was gratified, and he fell, as he deserved to do, in the duel. In England thumb-biting was

practiced to goad an adversary into fighting. Dekker tells us that St. Paul's Walk was notable for shoulderings, jeerings, and biting of thumbs to beget quarrels; and Shakspeare imports the fashion into Verona. When Gregory and Sampson espy two Montague men, out fly their swords; but prudent Sampson, to compel the others to take the initiative, bites his thumb at them, "which is a disgrace if they bear it." Challenged with the question, "Did you bite your thumb at me, sir?" he replies, "No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir; but I bite my thumb!" and in a few minutes the fray begins. It was not absolutely necessary to put the thumb to the mouth. In 1201 a rude fellow was sent to prison for casting vile contempt upon the clerk of the Sheriff of London, by raising his thumb, and saying, "Iphurt, Iphurt!" "in manifest contempt of our lord the king."

If one Neapolitan wishes to anger another, he places the palm of the right hand on the back of the left, and shakes the crossed thumbs, symbolical of donkey's ears, at him; a pleasant bit of pantomime answering to the "taking a sight" popular elsewhere, — a sign of contemptuous defiance, said to be at least as old as ancient Assyria. At any rate, it is as old as Rabelais, who thus describes Panurge receiving Thaumaste: "Panurge suddenly lifted up in the air his right hand, and put the thumb thereof into the nostril of the same side, holding his four fingers straight out and closed orderly in a parallel line to the point of the nose, shutting the left eye wholly, and making the other wink with profound depression of the eyebrows and eyelids. Then lifted he up his left hand, with hard wringing and stretching forth of his four fingers, and elevating his thumb, which he held in a line directly correspondent to the situation of his left hand, with the distance of a cubit and a half between them. This done, in the same form he abased toward the ground both the one and the other hand. Lastly, he held them in the midst, as aiming at the Englishmen's nose." Bon Gaultier's line, "Coffee-milling, care and sorrow, with a nose-adapted thumb," is explained by "Jabez," in *Notes and Queries*, as having reference to another way of taking a sight, on which the closed right hand was made to revolve round the little finger of the left. He laments that the degenerate schoolboy

of our day only takes a modified sight, consisting of the right hand locked, with the first finger applied to the nose, and the thumb to the chin. The change is to be deplored, but the new method is as effectually provocative of a row as the old, and what more does a boy want?

A maimed thumb sufficed to exempt a Roman from military service. A certain knight, being of Norval's opinion, that sons were best kept at home, cut off his children's thumbs; a cruel kindness, for which Augustus confiscated the fond father's property. Norman barons were given to hanging men and women up by their thumbs; a mode of torture the Spaniards improved upon by inventing the thumbscrew, for the special benefit of heretics. In mediæval England, secretaries found guilty of forging or falsifying deeds, were liable to lose both thumbs; while to draw a sword upon an alderman of the city of London involved the cutting-off of the offender's right hand. By an act of Philip and Mary, authors, printers, and publishers of seditious writings were visited with the same barbarous punishment, and, although some lawyers contended that the act was a temporary one, and died with Mary, it was put in force, in her sister's reign, against John Stubbs and his publisher, in Westminster market-place; Stubbs, as soon as the executioner had done his work, pulling off his hat with his left hand, and shouting, "God save the Queen!" A similar penalty, preliminary to a harder one yet, followed violent contempt of court to a much later date. Pepys records an instance in what he terms "a good story" of a prisoner flinging a stone at a judge, "while they were considering to transport him to save his life." The secretary's good story is set down in the legal jargon of the time, in Chief Justice Ireby's "Notes to Dyer's Report," and, serious as is the matter, the manner of reporting it is so comical that we cannot forbear quoting it. "Richardson, Ch. Just. de C. Benc. al Assis s at Salisbury, in isummer 1631. fuit assault per prisoner la condemna pur felony; que puis son condemnation ject un brickbat a le dit Justice; qui narrowly mist; et pur ces immediately fuit indictment drawn. per Noy, envers le prisoner, et son dexter manus ampute, and fix at gibbet, sur qui luy meme immediatement hange in presence de court."

At this time the hand of an executed man readily fetched ten guineas, being held

as efficacious in working cures as the holy bones of the saintliest of saints. Hangmen added to their income by taking money from persons desirous of receiving the dead-stroke; and it is still an article of popular faith in some parts of England, that a swollen neck may be reduced to its normal proportions by simply striking it three times with the hand of a man who has been hanged, but the operation ought to be performed before the criminal is cut down, Practicers of forbidden arts turned the hand of a dead murderer to much worse purpose, rendering it, by sundry incantations, the burglar's best companion, providing the proprietor made a candlestick of it, and was not plagued with as bad a memory as the unlucky Cassim Baba, making him forget the "charm" at the critical moment. Of this charm there are several versions, none possibly more effectual than Ingoldsby's:—

"Now open lock  
To the Dead Man's knock!  
Fly bolt and bar and band!  
Nor move, nor swerve,  
Joint, muscle, or nerve,  
At the spell of the Dead Man's hand.  
Sleep all who sleep, wake all who wake;  
But be as the dead, for the Dead Man's sake."

The "hand of glory," as it was called, was in use so lately as 1801, for in that year some thieves, in their hurry to get away from a house at Loughcrew, in Meath, left one, candle and all, behind them. A dead hand was also supposed to be an unerring guide to hidden treasure. Dousterswivel, enlightening Oldbuck on the virtues of the Hand of Glory, says, "It is a hand cut off from a man as has been hanged for murder, and dried very nice in de shmoke of juniper; and if you put a little of what you call yew wid your juniper it will not be any better,—that is, it will not be no worse. Then you take something of de fatch of de bear, and of de badger, and of de little sucking child as has not been christened, and you do make a candle and put it in de Hand of Glory at de proper hour and minute, wid de proper ceremonish; and he who seeketh for treasure shall never find none at all."

Dead murderers' hands not being always obtainable when wanted, the disciples of Voodoo obviate the difficulty by investing the hand of any mortal coming to an untimely end, with the desired power. Some twelve months ago, a Mobile negro, after

murdering a man, cut off his victim's hand, and treated it with quicksilver and chloroform to stay decomposition, in the belief that so long as he carried it about him, he was not only safe from discovery, but could enter a room in which a man lay sleeping, and strip it of its valuable movables without disturbing the occupant. The horrid talisman, however, proved his ruin, helping to convince a jury he was guilty of "murder in the first degree," a crime entailing imprisonment for life. This interesting sample of black humanity achieved his dead hand himself. Touchet, Lord Audley, had his thrust upon him when unhappy Philip Thicknesse, by his last will and testament, directed that, as soon as the breath was out of his body, his right hand should be cut off and sent to Lord Audley, that the sight of it might recall to his duty to God one who had forgotten his duty to his sire. Not so easy to comprehend is the purpose of the strange clause in the will of the late Countess of London, — "I further wish my right

hand to be cut off and buried in the park at Donnington, at the bend of the hill to the Trent, and a small cross over it, with the motto, 'I bide my time!'" The lady's instructions have been carried out to the letter.

Certainly they were too clear to allow of non-fulfilment on the plea of want of preciseness, a plea that might have been raised by the pupil of the old violinist of Villedeuil-sur-Seine, who promised his dying teacher not to allow his hand to be separated from his beloved Guarnarius, and to destroy the latter. Puzzled how to do the one without doing the other, the fiddler's friend could find no better way of keeping his promise than to cut off the violinist's hand at the wrist, and throw it, with the instrument clasped in its rigid fingers, into the Seine, to be fished up by the police, whose minds were much exercised to account for such a strange find, until the young fellow made a clean breast of it, and set all suspicion of foul play at rest.